

FROM TSARDOM TO THE STALIN CONSTITUTION

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FROM TSARDOM TO THE STALIN CONSTITUTION

by

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EXPLANATION OF TERMS

CADET: The Constitutional Democrats; an abbreviation formed by the first two Russian letters K.D. The Party was formed in October 1905.

CENTNER: Russian Centner = 220 lb.

DESSIATINE = 2.75 acres.

GOSPLAN: State Planning Commission.

HECTARE = 2.47 acres.

KILOGRAM = $2\frac{1}{4}$ lb. (approx.)

KILOMETRE = $\frac{5}{8}$ mile (approx.)

KOLKHOZ: Collective Farm.

KOLHOZY: Collective Farms.

KOLHOZNIK: A member of a collective farm.

KULAK: Literally fist, used to designate a rich peasant.

LABOUR DAY: A unit of work which is usually much less than an actual day's work.

MUZHIK: Peasant.

OZET: Society for settling toiling Jews on the land.

POOD: 36.11 lb.

RUSSIAN "WHITES": The counter-revolutionaries of various sections who fought against the Soviets.

SOVKHOZ: State farm.

SOVKHOZY: State farms.

TRUDOVIKI (Group of Toil): A Left Party supposed to represent mainly the peasants and demanding the confiscation of the landed estates and their transfer to the peasants.

VERST = 0.66 mile.

WHITE RUSSIA (Belorussia): One of the republics within the U.S.S.R.

CHAPTER I

PRE-WAR RUSSIA

THE history of Soviet Russia—the tremendous achievements of the two hundred¹ nationalities inhabiting the territory of the U.S.S.R. during the last twenty years (November 1917–November 1937)—reads much more like a chapter from an imaginative romance than an excerpt from sober history.

To assess accurately the progress made it is necessary to recall (a) the conditions which obtained in the Tsarist Empire, (b) the state to which Russia was reduced by the world war, (c) the losses inflicted on the country, human and material, by foreign support to the counter-revolutionary generals, by the blockade, and by foreign armed intervention between the dates of the Soviet Revolution, November 1917, and the final withdrawal of foreign troops from Russian soil, October 1922.

Pre-war Tsarist Russia included Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Russian Poland and Bessarabia, and had a population calculated at between 175,000,000 to 180,000,000. The country was overwhelmingly agricultural. It was estimated that only 14 per cent of the population lived in the urban areas and 86 per cent in the villages, and that 75 per cent of the entire population was engaged in agriculture. The soil, particularly in Central and South-Eastern Russia, the Caucasus and Turkestan, is very rich, but the yield, owing to lack of sufficient fertilizers, the uneconomic size of the individual holdings, and the primitive methods of cultivation in use, was far below the western European levels.

As regards fertilizers, the *Russian Year Book* (1914) states:

“The wonderful fertility of the black earth soil begins to show signs of deterioration. It is reckoned that for food and fodder about 600,000 tons of phosphoric acid are taken every year from the soil, but that

¹ The 1926 census showed that there were no less than one hundred and fifty-one languages in use.

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not more than 165,000 tons are returned to it. On a yearly average each acre of cultivated land gets in manure one-sixth of a pound of phosphoric acid. In Belgium the amount supplied is about 21 lb. per acre.”

In 1913 the arable land of Russia was approximately 263,000,000 acres, of which 138,000,000 was in the hands of the peasants. The number of peasant households was estimated at 16,000,000, and the average area of arable land in the possession of each household was about eight or nine acres. Naturally these households or farms varied in size, and it was estimated that about ten million of the farms were too small to maintain the occupants, and the peasants had to seek work elsewhere to support themselves and their families. The peasants’ holdings were not as a rule single units of soil, but consisted of strips of land, often considerable distances apart. Mr. C. R. Buxton, describing a visit to a district near Samara, wrote: “My host had three strips of land—one of wheat, one of rye, and one of millet—widely distant one from the other.”¹

The three-field system, i.e. one-third of the land being allowed to lie fallow each year, was still in vogue in 1913. Mr. H. N. Brailsford, recording his own observations, wrote: “One has only to see the long narrow strips of tillage and fallow, rye alternating with thistles, to realize that the first step is to educate the peasant out of his individualism.”²

Such small farmsteads divided into strips did not readily lend themselves to the application of modern agricultural machinery, but even the best agricultural implements which could be profitably used on such small holdings were not generally available. To take the case of ploughs, it was estimated that in 1913 fully 50 per cent of ploughs used were “hooked” ploughs, which did little more than scratch the surface of the soil. Only on the lands of rich peasants (*Kulaks*) and landed estate owners was modern agricultural machinery used.

Pre-war Russia did not produce even all the simple agricultural implements used in the country, and despite the establishment of

¹ *Report British Labour Delegation to Russia, 1920.*

² *The Russian Workers’ Republic.*

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factories within Russia by the International Harvester Company, etc., the majority of the more complicated agricultural machines were imported.

"In spite of the simplicity and importance of the scythe, Russia's supply comes almost entirely from abroad. There is only one large scythe factory in the country, but its output is small. A certain number of scythes is now being made by the peasant industries in the Urals, the Yaroslav Government, etc.; nevertheless, the import of scythes amounts to about one million roubles per year.

"Agricultural implements in use in Russia are of both foreign and Russian manufacture. Russia herself furnishes most of the ploughs, drills, and mowing machines, threshing and winnowing machines. From abroad are imported more complicated mowing machines, steam threshers, stationary steam engines, sorting machines, separators, etc.; ploughs, drills, and horse threshing machines."¹

On the same authority 50 per cent of the agricultural machinery and implements marketed in Russia in 1911 were imported. The result of the primitive methods of cultivation was that the yield from the soil was very low. Dr. J. M. Goldstein, Professor of Political Economy at the Moscow Institute of Commerce and Industry, stated: "The average wheat yield in Russia, per acre, is about one-half of that of Austria and France, one-third of that in England and Germany, and about one-fourth of that in Denmark, in spite of the fact that the soil in many parts of Russia is much richer than the soil of the majority of the countries of Europe, all of which, together, have hardly as great a belt of 'black soil' as European Russia has."²

In cattle raising, relative to the size of her population, Russia lagged far behind the other great agricultural countries. According to the calculations of Dr. J. M. Goldstein, the Argentine per thousand of her population had 5,320 heads of cattle, Australia 4,600, Canada 1,050, U.S.A. 860, but Russia had only 390.³

¹ *Russian Year Book* (1914).

² *Russia—Her Economic Past and Future*.

³ In this calculation eight sheep or three hogs were taken as being equivalent to one head of cattle.

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All this reflected itself in the standard of life of the peasants. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in its eleventh edition (1910-11) averred:

"The present condition of the peasants—according to official documents—appears to be as follows. In the twelve central governments they grow, on the average, sufficient rye-bread for only 200 days in the year—often for only 180 and 100 days. The peasantry are impoverished, and in many parts live on the verge of starvation for the greater part of the year."

Many reliable observers estimated that in some parts of the Empire, from 1870 to the end of the century, the rents and taxes imposed on the peasants absorbed the major part of the yield of the harvest. The peasants being the largest section of the population bore not only the greater part of the indirect taxes, but also the brunt of the direct taxation. Further, they were mulcted by the *Zemstvo*, on which they had little, and then only indirect, representation. As a matter of fact, in form and essence, albeit not in name, rural Russia up to the date of the Revolution was a feudal country. It was more the forms than the essence of Feudalism which were affected by the Emancipation Act of 1861. Prior to that Act the peasants were legally compelled to sweat and toil at an animal level of existence for the great landowners. After the enactment of that Act the same result was achieved by economic compulsion. This was made doubly certain by the precaution that the impoverished peasants only received for their own use about four-fifths of the land which they had cultivated under serfdom.

"Free Labour" which the somewhat changed times had demanded was as profitable to, and as pitilessly exploited by, the big landlords as serf labour had been in the past.

Even the Tsarist statesman, Count Witte (Prime Minister of Russia, 1905-6), admitted: "The peasants are free from the slave-owners. But they are now slaves to arbitrary power, legal disabilities, and to ignorance . . . the peasants have ceased to be private property. That is all that remains of the reform of February 19, 1861."

The peasants were scattered throughout the country in two

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million villages. Their small huts, consisting of one to two rooms, were built of logs or what is called in this country "mud and stud" (i.e. a timber framework, caulked with reeds and plastered over with a mixture of mud and clay reinforced with straw), with thatched or wooden roofs and mud floors. The windows were small, the ventilation was bad, the most elementary sanitation was lacking, and the huts were irregularly built, without any attempt at street construction. To quote the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* again: "The houses are generally built of wood and wear a poverty-stricken aspect. Owing to the great risks from fire the villages usually cover a large area of ground, and the houses are scattered and straggling."

Fires were frequent occurrences. Mr. Maurice Hindus¹ wrote: "Nothing has been so ruinous to the Russian peasants throughout the ages as fires. Figures which I have before me show that old Russia suffered fifteen times as much damage by flames as did France during the same period, and twenty times as much as Germany. On an average, each village burned once every ten years. In the old days there was an endless procession of pogorelsy—peasants who had lost their homes through fire—who would make the rounds of villages begging for bread, for straw, for pieces of lumber with which to build new homes for themselves."² Pails of water were the only means of fighting village fires. The "streets" in the villages after heavy rain became rivers of mud.

Writing of his native village regarding infantile mortality, Mr. Hindus said: "There was hardly a mother in the village who was spared the agony of a child's untimely death. They succumbed so easily, these peasant children, to the onslaught of smallpox, croup, and all manner of fevers and spasms. It could not be otherwise so long as the people lived in ill-smelling, unventilated one-room huts and shared these with their pigs and chickens and calves. Other things contributed to infant mortality. Mothers, for example,

¹ Mr. Maurice Hindus was born in Russia, emigrated to the United States of America at the age of fourteen, and has revisited Russia on several occasions since the Revolution.

² *Red Bread.*

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seldom bathed their babies, and fed them, with unwashed fingers or through artificial nipples made of dirty linen, their own chewings of black bread and potato, or the inevitable *kasha* (gruel).¹

As for the mentality of the peasants, Mr. Hindus wrote: "Their thoughts, their ambitions, their daily pursuits, were bounded by their village and the nearest town bazaar. Nor could they escape from their antecedents. They were born *muzhiks*, they would always remain *muzhiks*, and they would die *muzhiks*. That was their destiny, and they could conceive of none other. They were all but buried in these ancient marshlands."²

Referring again to his native village, Mr. Hindus declared: "In all the hundreds of years of its existence, the thousands of men and women who had lived and sweltered and died there had never known a schoolhouse. Few, very few of the *muzhiks* there had learned to read and write, or even to sign their names. Not one had ever subscribed to a newspaper. As a boy I earned barrels of apples and pumpkin seeds by signing papers for peasants or writing letters for them. Never shall I forget that Sunday afternoon during the Russo-Japanese War when a stranger passing through our village collected sacks of rye and hay in return for reading to the people news of the war from journals that were months old."³

Now to turn to the urban workers. As already mentioned, only about 14 per cent of the population lived in the towns. The number of workers engaged in industry, manufacturing and extractive, was small—about 3,500,000—but the number of home workers in the rural and urban districts combined amounted to about twice that figure.

Although it was generally believed that Russia was rich in all the important raw materials, they were being very little exploited. Up to the November Revolution only about one-tenth of the country had been geologically surveyed. In fact, the policy of the autocracy had been deliberately directed to preventing the industrial development of the country. They feared the rise of a manufacturing middle-class which would be a challenge to their dominance.

¹ *Red Bread.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

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They hoped to escape their 1789 by preventing the economic progress of Russia. The extent of this backwardness can be best expressed by a comparison. The output of coal in Russia (1913) was one-twenty-seventh, iron-ore one-twelfth, pig-iron one-twelfth, oil one-sixth, copper one-thirtieth, zinc one-forty-seventh, and cotton one-fourteenth of that in the U.S.A.¹ From these and other statistics Dr. Goldstein concluded that "the *per capita* wealth of Russia was six times less than that of the U.S.A. or England, and four times less than that of Germany. The same may be said concerning the annual *per capita* of Russia's population."

The towns, judged by the then existing Western-European standards, left very much to be desired. On the authority of the *Russian Year Book* (1914), in 1904, "892 towns with a population exceeding 10,000 possessed no organized water supply, only 38 were drained, only 55 possessed tramways, and only 105 had gas or electric lighting. In 320 of these towns there were no paved roads."

Things had not improved much eight years later. According to the same authority: "In 1912, out of 1,063 towns and urban settlements with a population exceeding 10,000 (the number of urban settlements was 182) only 219 possessed an organized water supply, making 20·6 per cent of the total number." The housing conditions of the urban workers were shocking. They lived either in insanitary wooden shacks on the outskirts or in the cellars and attics of big houses in the centre of the towns, invariably in cases of extreme overcrowding. These conditions were in keeping with those prevailing in the factories:

"A study of industrial conditions in Russia discloses a disregard on the part of employers for the dignity of human life and for the social dangers proceeding from the physical and psychological results of sweated labour often performed amid surroundings of a degrading and dehumanizing character."²

The Health Services were tragically insufficient. To quote the *Russian Year Book* (1914) again:

¹ *Russia: Her Economic Past and Future*, by Dr. J. M. Goldstein.

² British Government White Paper Cmd. 1240, 1921.

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"According to the latest statistics (1912) there are 21,747 doctors in Russia. In European Russia there is one doctor for 1,300 inhabitants in the towns, and one for 21,900 in the villages; in Asiatic Russia, one doctor for 2,800 townspeople, and one for 37,600 villagers. The state of public health in the provinces is due not only to bad sanitation and hygienic conditions, but also to the absence of medical aid. Even in governments where zemstvos exist, a large number of the population is left without medical aid."

The results were that "in 1910, 20,283,374 cases of contagious and infectious diseases were registered, being 12.62 per cent of the total population."¹

According to the same authority, Russia held one very unenviable record: it had the highest birth-rate and the highest-death rate in Europe. The average birth-rate for 1900-9 per thousand of the population in the leading European countries were: Russia, 46.1; Hungary, 37.2; Austria, 36.0; Germany, 34.1; Italy, 32.4; United Kingdom, 28.1; France, 19.7, and the average death-rate for the same period per thousand of the population was: Russia, 29.4; Hungary, 26.2; Austria, 24.1; Italy, 21.8; Germany, 19.8; France, 19.6; United Kingdom, 16.0.

Infant mortality was exceptionally high. In 1908, in thirty-eight governments of European Russia, 985,797 infants under one year died, i.e. 32.7 per cent of the total number born.²

In 1914, as already mentioned, the population of the Tsarist Empire amounted to between 175,000,000 and 180,000,000 souls, but the number of children attending the elementary and secondary schools amounted to only 8,000,000, and of these about 83 per cent attended the elementary schools. The result was that taking the country as a whole only 21 per cent³ could read and write, i.e. the country was 79 per cent illiterate. In the provinces and in Central Asia, illiteracy was as high as 95 per cent of the local population.

It is eloquent of the appalling conditions under which the masses of the people lived in pre-war Russia that a keen admirer of the

¹ *Russian Year Book* (1914).

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

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Tsarist regime, Mr. Stephen Graham, in the course of a description of a personal tour along the Black Sea coast and a visit to the Urals in 1911 and 1912, respectively, averred that: "Conditions of the employment of labour are so bad that they preach in themselves without books and pamphlets. Not all the skill and courage; brutality and diplomacy of the officials will stem the flood. Russian workmen combine more readily than English, have less care of their skins, less regard of the consequences. They are only kept in check by the tremendous odds at present against them."¹

Respecting Tuapse, a famous watering-place on the Black Sea coast, Mr. Graham wrote: "Tuapse is beautiful from a distance, but when you get into it, 'tis the most untidy place that was ever called a health resort; a confusion of little streets and bad shops, dirty coffee-houses, fruit-barrows, and dust. Even the sea, which a mile away is jewel-like and gleaming, is stirred up and refuse-strewn. Russians truly have little idea of what a watering-place should be."²

The conditions of Tuapse was typical of the other watering-places of Russia, such as Sotchi, and for that matter of most other towns of Russia. Mr. Graham continued: "Sotchi is undrained. It has no canalization. But then out of the seven hundred and fifty-two towns of European Russia, over seven hundred are without drains. Even those which may be said to be drained are without the familiar earthenware pipes; scooped-out logs are employed, fixed in an inclined plane! There is not one sanitary town in the whole Empire."³

At that time Russian cities were raising loans abroad for municipal development. Mr. Graham was under no delusions as to how they would be spent. He declared: "Several Russian cities have been borrowing money lately in the European market; I have seen the prospectuses of loans to Moscow and Nikolaef at least, and I think these cities raised the money they asked for. I am afraid not much of that money will be spent on the drains. The money, alas, will go chiefly to enrich an army of adipose bribe-taking officials and

¹ *Changing Russia.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

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engineers, the myriads of the upper middle class who batten on the public funds.”¹

Even in the construction of churches dishonesty abounded. He averred: “On the spiritual side it must be mentioned that the city (Rostov) has two immense maimed cathedrals, imitations of St. Basil and St. Saviour at Moscow, put up at the cost of several millions of roubles, but shamefully scamped by the building contractors.”²

Regarding the Army, Mr. Graham wrote: “Russia is on the whole weak in war—weak because her War Office is corrupt and her soldiers corruptible, from the highest officer to the new recruit.”³

Apparently the educated classes in the industrial areas like Rostov were no better. The author stated: “Among the learned professions, lawyers, doctors, and engineers make fortunes on circumlocution, venereal disease, and palm oil.”⁴

As to housing conditions of the peasants, Mr. Graham called at a peasant’s hut and asked for shelter. He relates: “The peasant pointed to the inside of the hut and indicated that I could stay here the night with the pig and chickens.”⁵ That was typical of peasant life in Tsarist Russia.

Regarding infantile mortality and the high death-rate Mr. Graham wrote: “The rather sweet-looking plump Marfa, wife of clumsy Dmitri the door-keeper, lately brought a baby into the world, her fifth; the other four all died successively about a week after birth.” “Marfa”⁶ was typical of many Russian mothers.

As regards the high death-rate generally, the author stated: “There is no such thing as a municipal conscience in Russia. The average life to which a man attains in Moscow is thirty-seven only. Where is the four-score of the Psalmist? Is it not futile that Professor Metchnikov in Paris spends his energies trying to discover a diet that will prolong old age, whilst Moscow students are gasping for a decent sewer that would add a dozen years to their youth?”⁷

¹ *Changing Russia.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

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These are a few typical passages from Mr. Graham's graphic description of his journeys in Tsarist Russia, the endless talk, the incorrigible middle-class, the Caucasian robbers, the "never-ending malaria" of the Black Sea watering-places, the miracle-working church, the "Russian God," the comfortless wooden third-class carriages, the bribery everywhere, the "Bashkirs and Tartars standing by in rags," etc., every additional passage would add to the darkness of the picture. Yet Mr. Graham was not only not an opponent of Tsardom, but on the contrary he was an ardent admirer of that regime. In so far as he criticized it at all, it was because it occasionally and very sporadically permitted the economic development of the country. He wanted Russia to stand still eternally. To quote himself, he was a "true Conservative" as regards Russia, and—

"The true Conservative wishes to conserve his country and nation in a well-defined state of prosperity and happiness. He believes that Russia is worth to God in terms of simple human lives, and not in terms of factory shafts and vulgar fortunes. He believes in the nation as a Church, and not in the nation as a shop, not even in the nation as a co-operative and profit-sharing shop. His ideal is 'Holy Russia,' the foundation of which is the peasantry, whose framework is the Church, whose head the Tsar."¹

Mr. Graham's attitude towards Tsardom gives added importance to his portrayals of life in pre-war Russia. He can hardly be suspected of adding unnecessarily drab hues.

It was not our intention to deal at any great length with conditions in pre-war Russia. We only wished to recall, from unimpeachable sources, some basic and general facts which were well known to pre-war students of international affairs, but which are sometimes forgotten to-day. It is necessary to visualize, at least in broad outline, what Tsarist Russia was like, if one is to appraise accurately the achievements of the Soviet Government.

¹ *Changing Russia.*

CHAPTER II

THE EFFECTS OF THE WORLD WAR
(AUGUST 1914 TO MARCH 1917)

IT is not our aim in this and the immediately following chapters to deal at length with developments and happenings within the frontiers of Russia between the dates of the outbreak of the world war and the final withdrawal of the last foreign troops from Soviet territory in October 1922. This has been treated of in considerable detail in our *Armed Intervention in Russia*, published by Messrs. Victor Gollancz, Ltd.

The sequence of events both in Russia and on the various fronts from the date, August 1, 1914, when Germany declared war on Russia, up to the date of the Tsar's abdication, March 15, 1917, were an eloquent testimony to the economic backwardness of Russia, the hopeless incapacity and despicable venality of the autocracy, and the marvellous insight and iron determination of Lenin.

Neither Russia as a country nor the Tsarist Army, despite all the French and British loans, were in a condition to face such a formidable opponent as Germany. The country was seething with unrest, and the Government was incapable of any radical attempt to remove the causes of the serious discontent. It knew only one weapon, and one that always fails in the long run, i.e. suppression. Sir George Buchanan, British Ambassador to Tsarist Russia, wrote: "He (Stolypin, then Prime Minister) relied too much on the police and suppressed any manifestation of discontent without attempting to remove the causes which had given rise to it."¹ Later he added: "Discontent became so general and so acute, strikes succeeded each other in such rapid succession and assumed such dangerous proportions that it was hardly surprising that the German Ambassador should have predicted that the declaration of war would start the revolution."²

¹ *My Mission to Russia*.

² *Ibid.*

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The Tsarist Government constantly utilized the services of *agents-provocateurs*. "Though it seems almost incredible, it is a fact that the Government was in the habit of employing creatures like Azev, who, acting as their *agents-provocateurs*, incited to crime and murder and then delivered over into the hands of the police their unsuspecting victims."¹

It is highly improbable that the autocracy, because of its very nature, could ever have had so organized and developed the country that it would have been in a condition to face a European war. To quote Sir George again: "I remember once asking a distinguished member of the Duma who was, during the Balkan crisis, advocating the adoption by the Entente of a firmer policy, whether Russia was ready to face a European war. 'No,' was his reply; 'but she never will be ready.' He was right. Her industries were still in a backward state; she had not sufficient factories, and those which she had often lacked the requisite machinery and the necessary number of skilled workmen."²

After the war had broken out, the country, on the surface, but only on the surface, had been, as one commentator wrote, "transformed." But one party, the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin and Stalin, saw through this veneer as through glass. As a matter of fact, on the eve of the declaration of war, the workers of Leningrad, then St. Petersburg, had actually begun an armed revolt: "barri-cades suddenly made their appearance in the streets of Petrograd—on the very day when the fatal order for mobilization was issued by the Tsar! This is a cardinal fact to remember: Russia was in the incipient throes of another revolution when the war broke out, and the leaders of that revolution were the Bolsheviks."³

The revolt was not successful, it had to be called off, but the Bolsheviks only retreated, they in no way gave up the fight. The St. Petersburg Committee of the party immediately issued a leaflet headed: "Who are our enemies?" It read:

¹ *My Mission to Russia.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *The Bolshevik Revolution*, M. Litvinov.

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“We are robbed by the landlords, we are robbed by the manufacturers, the houseowners, and the tradesmen, we are robbed by the police, we are robbed by the Tsar and his officials. And when we become tired of this robbery, when we want to protect our interests, when we want to proclaim a strike, the police, the soldiers, and the Cossacks are let loose against us, we are attacked, we are thrown into prison, we are deported to Siberia, and we are hunted down like mad dogs. Those are our real enemies. . . . But now they want to mislead us and make us believe that our enemy is the German whom we have never seen in face at all. They want to incite us against the Germans, and because they require our arms and our fists they sing a song about national unity. Now they are trying to prevail upon us that we should forget all internal strife, that we should all unite in one patriotic gush, that we should renounce our own workers’ cause, that we should make their cause our own, and that we should conquer fresh lands for their Tsar and their landowners. But shall we, Russian workers, really be so foolish as to take these lying phrases seriously? Shall we really betray our own cause? No. If we must sacrifice our lives let us do so for our own cause, and not in the interests of the Romanoffs and their landowners. They are placing arms in our hands. Well and good. Let us be men, let us take the arms in order to conquer for the working class new conditions of life.”

So inefficient was the Tsarist military machine that it was unable to calculate ahead for any length of time as to what quantities of ammunition they would require. Sir George Buchanan relates that on September 25, 1914, General Joffre inquired as to whether the Russian Army had sufficient supplies of ammunition to meet anticipated demands, and he was informed that there was no need to worry. “Then,” relates the Ambassador, “suddenly, on December 18th, the French Ambassador and I were informed by the Chief of the Staff at the Ministry for War that, though Russia had in her depots men enough and to spare to make good her colossal losses in the war, she had no rifles wherewith to arm them, and that her reserves of artillery ammunition were exhausted. This announcement came as a bolt from the blue.”¹

By the same date the “Russian Steamroller,” both in the North and South, had been definitely checked. The Bolshevik forecasts

¹ *My Mission to Russia.*

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were being fulfilled. In January 1915 the central organ of the Party declared:

“Yet it moves. You remember the thunderous awakening of the Russian working class and of the entire Russian democracy after the bloodshed of January 22, 1905 (‘Bloody Sunday’ at St. Petersburg, which ushered in the first revolution)? A similar thunderous awakening shall be witnessed after the present war, after this world-wide slaughter which has irrigated by human blood the fields extending over thousands of miles along the present battle fronts, which has coloured red scores and hundreds of rivers in France, in Russian Poland, in Serbia, and in Turkey. The hour of settling the accounts will come. The dawn of civil war will begin. Let there be darkness round us at present. Let treachery and cowardice surround us on all—even the least expected—sides. We, on our part, believe in our old banner.”

Russia’s military position after six months of war was wellnigh desperate. Her native industry was incapable of supplying the needs of her fighting forces, and the extent to which her allies could make good the deficiency was severely limited, firstly because their own military leaders were calling for more and more supplies, and secondly because Russia could only receive help through Archangel (ice-bound for several months of the year) and Vladivostok in the Far East. The Straits had been closed by Turkey, and the Baltic was controlled by the German Fleet. Russia had an ice-free port in the west, Alexandrovsk, but the Murman Railway connecting this port with St. Petersburg was not completed until the end of 1916, another proof of the gross incompetence of the Tsarist autocracy.

From June to September 1915 the Tsarist Army suffered a series of crushing defeats along its entire western front from Przemysl in the south to Kovno in the north. Its equipment was totally inadequate. Sir George Buchanan wrote: “The shortage in rifles was so great that a considerable percentage of the men had to wait unarmed till they could pick up the rifles of their fallen comrades.”¹

Mr. Maxim Litvinov, expatiating at greater length on this series

¹ *My Mission to Russia.*

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of defeats, stated: "The disasters were caused, in the first place, by a most appalling lack of guns and munitions. Yet scores of millions had been spent on the equipment of the army during the preceding ten years. What had become of them? They had gone into the pockets of corrupt generals and contractors, and had been wasted by incompetent administrators. Who were the army leaders? They were men of the same stamp as those who had lost the war in Manchuria ten years previously. They had, for the most part, attained their high posts through patronage and drawing-room influence, and many of them were downright traitors, as was proved in the case of General Rennenkampf, the hero of the disaster at Tannenberg, and General Sukhomlinoff, the War Minister himself."

In addition to all this there was a strong agitation within Russia, led by Count Witte, in favour of a separate peace with the Central Powers, and the country was honeycombed with German spies.

As regards these two matters,¹ Sir George Buchanan was under no delusions. "Count Witte," he wrote, "was now openly declaring Russia had nothing to gain by continuing the war, and ought to make peace." And as regards German spies, Sir George wrote: "Petrograd was throughout the war infested with their (Germany's) secret agents and sympathizers."

Another contributory cause to the debacles at the front was the wholly inadequate railway system. White Paper Cmd. 1240, in dry official but cogent language, stated:

"In a special degree, the railway services suffered (a) serious depletion, both of their experienced administrative staff and skilled mechanics; (b) owing to the transformation of certain railway shops into factories for the preparation of munitions.

"This occasioned a decline in the efficiency of the railway services, which ultimately became progressive. It was evident in 1916 that the transport system was no longer able adequately to maintain, at one and the same time, the supply of the armies at the front and of the population at home."

¹ *My Mission to Russia.*

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The Tsar in September 1915, despite the pressing advice of the Allied Diplomatic Corps, himself superseded the Grand Duke Nicholas as Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army. Sir George Buchanan relates how in an audience with the Empress he tried to persuade her to dissuade the Tsar from this course, but she swept aside his submissions, declaring: "The Emperor, unfortunately, is weak, but I am not, and I intend to be firm." From that time onward, so averred the British Ambassador, "the Empress . . . virtually governed Russia." Nine months later, June 1916, the Russian Army advanced to the Carpathians, but by the end of August the offensive had spent itself, due to the usual causes: inadequate preparation, deficient transport, and shortage of military supplies, the latter despite the fact that considerable quantities had been sent by the Allies.

By this date the country was thoroughly war-weary, and the colossal losses suffered by the fighting forces coupled with the proved incapacity of the autocracy had brought Tsardom into widespread disrepute. White Paper Cmd. 1240 declared:

"By the autumn of 1916 a large number of officers and the majority of the *intelligentsia*—patriotic, active, and resolute—had been led to the conviction that a state of affairs had arisen which could not be allowed to go on. It has been said that, eighteen months before the revolution broke out, discipline in the army had begun to be affected as a result of the disorganization both at the front and in the rear, and the enormous casualties sustained, and that revolution became a common subject of discussion among the officers in the messes of the Guard Regiments."

Sir George Buchanan, in the course of a note to Whitehall, August 18, 1916, wrote: "If the Emperor continues to uphold his present reactionary advisers a revolution is, I fear, inevitable. The civil population has had enough of an administrative system which, in a country so rich as Russia is in natural resources has, thanks to incompetence and bad organization, rendered it difficult for them to procure many of the first necessities of life even at famine prices. The army, on the other hand, is not likely to forget or to

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forgive all it has suffered at the hands of the existing administration.”¹

As the year wore on the internal state of the country became progressively worse, in addition to which more and more the revolting Court scandals became common knowledge. The White Paper already quoted stated:

“The revelation, in the course of this year, of the scandals proceeding at the Court, and associated with the name of the Monk Rasputin, still further deepened popular resentment against the autocracy. The appointment of Shtürmer, a notorious pro-German, as Prime Minister in December 1916, was quickly followed by the murder of Rasputin. It is held by many that the revolution may be said to have begun with these events.”

Two months later, October 18, 1916, the British Ambassador reported to the Foreign Office: “The losses which Russia has suffered are so colossal that the whole country is in mourning. So many lives have been uselessly sacrificed in the recent unsuccessful attacks against Kovel. and other places, that the impression is gaining ground that it is useless continuing the struggle, and that Russia, unlike Great Britain, has nothing to gain by prolonging the war.”²

Sir George’s estimate of the situation was underlined in White Paper Cmd. 1240, which declared:

“The casualties of the army in the first ten months of the war are said to have been 3,800,000, and a Russian staff officer has estimated the total losses up to the beginning of the revolution at 10,000,000, and expressed the opinion that the army had had to be replaced three times entirely along the whole front of seven hundred miles during the period August 1914 to January 1917.

“These colossal losses created an extraordinary impression throughout the army. In addition to the incompetence and disorganization everywhere prevailing it was suggested that treachery was also active, and that forces were at work at the Court whose object it was to promote the defeat and dissolution of the army with a view to making inevitable

¹ *My Mission to Russia*, vol. ii.

² *Ibid.*

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the conclusion of a separate peace between Russia and the Central Powers."

The combination of these circumstances alone would have been sufficient to create revolution, but in addition, early in 1917, the towns were faced with a severe food shortage. Commenting on this added tribulation, Mr. Maxim Litvinov wrote: "Above all, why was the country, which had hitherto been one of the principal agricultural countries in Europe, suddenly hurled into the abyss of famine? Because all the able-bodied male population had been recklessly drawn into the army, because the widest scope had been given to speculators and landowners, and because the weak transport system had been criminally allowed to come to complete ruin."

Events now moved with avalanche-like suddenness and speed. Many descriptions have been written of the historic sweep of events in February–March 1917, but one of the most succinct appeared in White Paper Cmd. 1240. It read:

"It was in these circumstances that the Duma met in February 1917. During this month blizzards interrupted railway traffic and the delivery of flour to Petrograd. The bread supply failed. Long queues were to be seen throughout the city, and in the working-class quarters bread was scarcely to be obtained at all. A series of mass demonstrations began. The bridges across the Neva were drawn up, but thousands of hungry men and women poured across the frozen river and made their way to the Nevsky Prospect on the other side.

"On the morning of Monday, the 13th March, four Guard Regiments revolted, disarmed their officers, and killed or arrested them. The revolution had begun.

"The revolution was sudden, spontaneous, and all-embracing. All classes of the population gave to it their active support or tacitly acquiesced in it. It was so sudden and unexpected that there were no signs of any premeditated plan of revolutionary action. The soldiers of the Petrograd garrison, ignoring or opposing orders of their officers, flowed out on to the streets of Petrograd and joined the hungry crowds of workmen."

To which we would add a sentence from Mr. Maxim Litvinov's booklet. "The women of the people, standing in queues in front

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of food shops, began the dance which soon developed into skirmishes between the police and the crowds in the streets. Then Cossacks were sent to make use of their whips, but they partly refused to do so and partly were met by soldiers of certain regiments of the Guards who took the part of the people. Street fighting rapidly developed, more and more regiments went over to the people, the arsenals were sacked and their contents distributed among the crowds, and before anyone was properly aware the capital was in the hands of the workers and soldiers."

Two days later Tsardom was no more. Three centuries of Romanov rule had crashed—crashed like a condemned building whose foundations, walls, and roof were too rotten for further use of any kind, and the revolution had been carried through by workers and soldiers. The March Revolution was truly described as the greatest event up to that date in human history.

THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT
(MARCH 1917 TO NOVEMBER 1917)

THE Tsarist regime had collapsed. What next? Would developments in Russia follow on the classic lines of Britain and France? Would Russia become a constitutional bourgeois monarchy, or a bourgeois republic? Many observers, Russian and foreign, thought she would. They seemed to have missed one fundamental difference between the Western-European and the Russian revolutions. The former had been led by a rising manufacturing and commercial class in each case. The Russian revolution had been carried through by a combination of workers and rank and file soldiers, mainly of peasant origin. The "Cadets," the Liberal Party of Russia, the political representatives of the factory owners and merchants, had no part or lot in the March Revolution, and owing to the slight degree to which industry and commerce had been developed in Russia they had comparatively little support in the country.

However, when the revolution was an accomplished fact, the Cadets, owing to the weakness of some of the socialist leaders, were permitted to place themselves at the head of the victorious procession. They hoped to lead it into "safe channels." They did not even want a republic; their aims were in politics, a constitutional monarchy; in economics, capitalism.

From a provisional committee of the Duma,¹ a Provisional Government was formed with Prince Lvov, a mild liberal, as President of the Council, Miliukov, a liberal imperialist, as Foreign Minister, and Gutschkov as Minister for War. The Provisional

¹ This Duma, the fourth Duma, had been elected on a very narrow franchise and could not claim in the slightest to represent the workers and peasants. Kerensky said that the fourth Duma represented "the aristocracy and the middle classes." (*The Catastrophe*, by A. F. Kerensky.)

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Government was to hold office only until a Constituent Assembly met in which was to be vested the government of the country; and the Provisional Government, a few weeks after the March Revolution, in a proclamation to the nation, declared that it would "convoke as soon as possible the Constituent Assembly on the basis of universal suffrage, at the same time assuring the gallant defenders of the country their share in the parliamentary election."

This statement was clear and definite, but the Provisional Government showed not the slightest desire to implement their solemn pledge.

The workers and soldiers who had carried through the Revolution formed Soviets as they went along on the model of the 1905 Revolution, and the Petrograd Soviet, right from the beginning, enjoyed enormous prestige throughout the country because of the leading role which it had played.

The Petrograd Soviet, so declared White Paper, Cmd. 1240, was "regarded as the leader of the Revolution by the workers and soldiers in Petrograd and by the rank and file of the army and the popular masses throughout Russia."

On the other hand, the same publication also stated: "The Provisional Committee of the Duma . . . loomed largely in the minds of the masses as a reactionary remnant of the old order which had passed away. The Provisional Government to which it had given birth inherited the popular suspicion with which it was regarded."

Right from the time that the Revolution was an accomplished fact there were two governments in Russia, the Provisional Government and the Soviets, and the former could do little without the consent and support of the latter. In fact, at times the Soviets, as we shall soon see, called the tune.

When the Provisional Government was formed on March 16, 1917, men like Tchkheidze, the parliamentary leader of the Mensheviks, and Kerensky, the leader of "the Group of Toil," became the natural leaders of the Soviets, but only Kerensky at this date joined the Provisional Government.

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It was interesting to learn subsequently that the British Ambassador apparently did not have a very high opinion of Prince Lvov's government. He wrote: "The impression which the new Ministers made on me when I went to convey to them our official recognition was not such as to inspire me with great confidence for the future. Most of them already showed signs of strain, and struck me as having undertaken a task beyond their strength."¹

Immediately after their birth, serious friction arose between the two "Governments" because, among other things, their war aims differed fundamentally. Miliukov and Company were imperialists. They wanted the active prosecution of the war and the fulfilment of the secret treaties, viz. the annexation of Constantinople and the Straits. On the other hand, the Soviets, as they announced in an historic address to the "Peoples of the World" dated March 27, 1917, wanted a peace "without annexations and without indemnities."

Miliukov, much against his will, was compelled to send the Soviet proclamation to the Allied Governments. Ultra-clever in a covering letter, he advised the Allies not to take the Soviet demand seriously. "The letter was couched in language," wrote Sir George Buchanan, "which, if it did not contravene the letter of the proclamation, was an unquestionable contravention of its spirit."

Nemesis followed quickly. The delegates to the Soviets had no use for this "diplomacy." They meant just what they said. They again made their powerful voices heard, and Miliukov had to vacate the Foreign Office.

It is questionable whether within the ranks of the Soviets in the first days of the Revolution, the leaders quite clearly understood the role which they wished to assign to the Soviets in the future government of the country. All the three socialist parties, the Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries, and Bolsheviks, had advocated the establishment of a Constituent Assembly, and at this time they all probably thought, including some of the Bolsheviks then in Petrograd, that after the Constituent Assembly had been

¹ *My Mission to Russia*, vol. ii.

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established, the Soviets would have finished their work and would voluntarily go out of existence.

Further, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries argued that the Revolution was a bourgeois revolution, and in the historic nature of things must be allowed to develop along classical lines, i.e. the establishment of parliamentary democracy coupled with land reform. Apparently these gentlemen could not conceive that the workers and soldiers who had carried through the revolution could control it and establish their own form of government. The Bolsheviks then in Petrograd, cut off from their leaders who were in exile or in prison in Siberia, were not content with the mere establishment of a Constituent Assembly, but many of them had no clear ideas as to what should follow. When Lenin, the acknowledged leader of the Bolsheviks, returned from exile, April 16, 1917, he at once advocated not the early summoning of a Constituent Assembly, but the immediate establishment of a Soviet Republic.

To quote M. Litvinov: "As soon as he arrived, he submitted a new programme to his party and the people at large, of which the main plank was that Russia must become not a bourgeois democratic, and therefore not a parliamentary republic, after the French or American model, but a Soviet republic, that is, a commonwealth in which the central power would belong to a central committee of all the Soviets in the country, and the local government would be carried on by the local Soviets of delegates from the working class and the poorer peasantry, as the sole organs of the State. In other words, the Russian republic was to be a republic in which the proletarian classes would alone exercise authority, to the exclusion of the capitalist and landlord classes and their hangers-on. It would be a Socialist State organization, pursuing as its ultimate object the expropriation of the propertied classes and the socialization of the means of production."

But not to speak of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries who were convinced that the Russian Revolution could be nothing but a bourgeois revolution, some of the adherents of the Bolsheviks

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—such as Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, and others—maintained that such a programme in such a backward country as Russia then was could not be carried out unless other countries too went socialist. We shall return to this subject in a subsequent chapter.

In the meantime Kerensky chuckled. He told Sir George Buchanan that “the Communist doctrines preached by Lenin have made the Socialists lose ground.” Kerensky altogether underestimated the power of appeal which Lenin’s proposals had for the masses of the workers and the energy of the Bolshevik agitation.

The Bolsheviks persisted in their propaganda, and Lenin in particular incurred the hatred of all the reactionary forces in Russia as well as that of the Allied diplomatic corps, whose real sympathies were with the overthrown autocracy. It is very significant that the British Ambassador, according to his own memoirs, whenever he dared, advised the Tsar to be a little less autocratic towards his people, but he always did so most deferentially. However, he seemed to have no hesitation in tendering definite advice to the members of the Provisional Government. Within a fortnight of Lenin’s return he apparently without any diffidence admonished Miliukov to have him arrested, and Miliukov seems to have accepted this unwarranted interference in the internal affairs of Russia without the mildest of protests. When it was a question of advising progress, Sir George was usually apologetic and hesitant, but when it was a matter of counselling reaction, he spoke with undiplomatic frankness and firmness.

The rank and file of the Russian Army had no longer any desire to continue the war because, as the British Ambassador informed the Foreign Office in a despatch,¹ May 21, 1917: “The Russian soldier of to-day does not understand for what or for whom he is fighting.”

Despite this momentous and explosive fact, the timid Provisional Government was bullied and cajoled by the Allied diplomatic corps into preparing an offensive against the Teutonic forces. Meanwhile, in May 1917, three more Soviet leaders—Tseretelli,

¹ *My Mission to Russia*, vol. ii.

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Chernov, and Scobelev—joined the Provisional Government, and immediately afterwards that body, in an address to the nation, promised that it would “convoke the Constituent Assembly in Petrograd as soon as possible.”

The decision of the Soviets to permit three more of its leaders to enter the Provisional Government was a tragic mistake, because instead of the additional members influencing that institution, the bourgeois members of the Provisional Government, by constantly threatening to resign, frightened Kerensky, Tseretelli, Chernov, and Scobelev into counselling the Soviets to adapt their policy in conformity with the wishes of the majority of the Provisional Government.

As M. Litvinov with absolute truth wrote: “They henceforth became simple hostages in the hands of the bourgeoisie, whose representatives were now in a position to bring every pressure to bear upon their colleagues, and, indirectly, upon the Soviet dominated by them, by threats of resignation and termination of the precious coalition. The result, indeed, was that all projects of reform, including the summoning of a Constituent Assembly, and the land distribution, were now shelved indefinitely, and instead of working for peace the Government, whose most active member now became Kerensky, the successor of Guchkov in the War Office, began now to make active preparations for an offensive, in order, as they said, to make the voice of Russian democracy ‘weighty,’ both in the councils of the Allies and in the future negotiations with the enemy.”

This offensive began on July 1st on the south-western front, and was to have been supported on other fronts to a lesser degree. At first it met with success. The Austrians were driven back and had to yield much ground. But the heart of the Russian troops was not in the fight, and three weeks later they were in general retreat. They not only yielded all the territory which they had occupied, but had, in addition, to evacuate Stanislau and Tarnopol. Meanwhile, in Petrograd, on July 16, 1917, an armed revolt had broken out under the slogans: “Down with the capitalist ministers,”

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“Down with the war,” “Give us bread.” The rising was not under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, although it was no doubt influenced by their agitation. At first the revolt met with considerable success; in fact, it nearly brought down the regime. “The position of the Government,” wrote Sir George Buchanan, “on the afternoon was a very critical one, and had not the Cossacks and a few loyal regiments come out in time to save them they would have had to capitulate.”

In the midst of the struggle the Bolshevik offices and press were raided, and forged documents were circulated purporting to prove that Lenin and his colleagues were German agents. All this gave the bourgeoisie and their hangers-on their opportunity. The Provisional Government decided to arrest the Bolshevik leaders. Some were thrown into prison. Others sought refuge in flight. Had Lenin been caught he would certainly have been murdered. General Polovtsov relates: “The officer who was going off to the summer resort of Terrioki in Finland, where we suspected Lenin to be in hiding, came to ask me for my last instructions, and inquired whether I wished to receive this gentleman alive. I smilingly reminded him of the fact that very often prisoners try to escape, and that in those cases one has to shoot immediately.

“My Intelligence Department reaped a golden harvest in its hunt after the Bolsheviks, but unfortunately the officer who was tracking Lenin arrived in Terrioki half an hour after that hero had fled from there. The officer would not have forgotten my last instructions, and the world would never have heard of that dangerous prophet again.”¹

The mentality here revealed by General Polovtsov’s frank and boastful admission was typical of the officers serving under the Kerensky Government.

Immediately after the rising had been liquidated the Provisional Government, in another proclamation to the nation, promised that the elections to the Constituent Assembly would take place at the “appointed time,” i.e. September 17, 1917. Later the “appointed

¹ *Glory and Downfall*, by Polovtsov.

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time" was postponed till November. Throughout all this time the Bolshevik leaders in the Soviets unceasingly denounced the Provisional Government for continually violating their own solemn pledges respecting the summoning of the Constituent Assembly.

In the first week of August there was another Government reshuffle. Kerensky became Prime Minister, and General Kornilov (a Tsarist officer) Commander-in-Chief. The latter was a fatal appointment. Kornilov seems to have lost no time in preparing for a *coup d'état* and the establishment of a military dictatorship with himself at the head. Sir George Buchanan relates that on September 5th he was informed of all this by "a Russian friend." Kornilov proclaimed himself dictator on September 10, 1917, but within two days the revolt was crushed. To quote M. Litvinov: "Kornilov was crushed by the efforts of the railwaymen, the working men's Red Guards, and the Lettish troops, Bolsheviks to a man."

Kornilov's objective, as already mentioned, was a military dictatorship, and it was supported by those bootlickers of Tsardom, the Cadets. Kerensky recounts: "The part played by a very considerable and influential group of liberals in the preparation of General Kornilov's rebellion gave rise to a very strong feeling within the revolutionary democracy against continuing with the bourgeois-socialist coalition ministry."¹

That is not surprising, but what is amazing, if Kerensky is correct, is that this plot would seem to have been laid in London and hatched out by the British Military Mission in Petrograd. Kerensky narrates:

"In August, shortly before his rebellion, General Kornilov received a letter from London, brought by a well-known soldier of fortune, Aladin, once a Trudovik member of the First Duma. This letter was from a very prominent statesman, and conveyed his wholehearted approval of General Kornilov's intention. It is not improbable that this message was the deciding factor in the destiny of that unsuccessful Russian Napoleon.

¹ *The Crucifixion of Liberty*, by A. Kerensky.

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"But *did* General Knox act entirely on his own initiative? And did Commander Locker-Lampson promise to aid General Kornilov with his tank corps also entirely on his own initiative? I doubt it very much. In fact, I am certain that no one in the British Military Mission could have undertaken such a responsibility on individual initiative. I also know that there was a divergence of attitude to the Provisional Government at the British Embassy. Sir George was perfectly loyal, and understood our difficult, tragic position. There were also men like Bruce Lockhart who regarded any attempt against the Government as sheer madness. But the views which gained the upper hand in London and in Paris were those which reflected the attitude of the Russian liberal, conservative, and military circles."¹

General Kornilov was "the darling of the Allied military missions" according to Kerensky.

The Kornilov revolt further discredited the Provisional Government and greatly enhanced the prestige and authority of the Bolsheviks. Under the pressure of the masses some of the Bolshevik leaders had been released from prison, and others were able to appear in public again, albeit at considerable personal risk. They now denounced the Provisional Government as definitely counter-revolutionary, and sent their clarion call in ever-louder tones throughout the vast Empire: "All power to the Soviets."

The Bolsheviks have had a habit, often misunderstood in Western Europe, of attributing to their opponents certain aims, whereas actually they mean that the policy of their opponents will lead to certain results. They charged the Provisional Government with being counter-revolutionary. It is beyond question, and that is probably what the Bolsheviks meant, that their policy objectively would lead to counter-revolution, whatever their subjective aims may have been.

The British Ambassador, who frankly declared that all his "sympathies" were with Kornilov, admitted that plotting had gone on for weeks to overthrow the Government, and that "there were so many persons in the secret of this counter-revolutionary movement that it was a secret no longer."²

¹ *The Crucifixion of Liberty.*

² *My Mission to Russia*, vol. ii.

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The facts were that by this time the Provisional Government was completely discredited, that it was a weak bulwark against counter-revolution, and that the one party in Russia which was well led, knew its own mind, and had a clear programme, was the Bolshevik Party.

To quote White Paper, Cmd. 1240: "Amidst the divided counsels and mutual recriminations of those whose united action was essential to the stemming of the advancing tide the Provisional Government became a melancholy spectre of governmental impotence. Alone among this babel of dissentient voices the cries of the Bolsheviks: 'Down with the war'; 'Peace and the land'; and 'The victory of the exploited over the exploiters,' sounded a clear and certain note which went straight to the heart of the people."

Reluctant admission is the highest praise. Sir George Buchanan, who, as we have already seen, had no love for Lenin and his followers, in a despatch to the Foreign Office early in October 1917, declared: "The Bolsheviks, who form a compact minority, have alone a definite political programme."¹

With such a programme in hand the Bolsheviks laid their plans for the organization of a rising against the Provisional Government. They carried on an active agitation among the masses of the people for the Bolshevik programme, under the general slogan of "Bread, Peace, and the Land." At the same time they attacked vigorously the policy of the Kerenskys, Tseretelis, and Chernovs. The members of the Provisional Government treated or pretended to treat the onslaughts of the Bolsheviks upon their regime with contempt and proclaimed that they were ready to meet the Bolshevik attacks should they at any time become serious. The Bolsheviks, however, knew they had the vast majority of the workers and soldiers behind them and went on with their preparations. The Provisional Government proved powerless. Litvinov relates: "When the night of November 6th-7th, fixed for the commencement of the operations, came, the whole edifice reared up by the coalition-mongers and

¹ *My Mission to Russia*, vol. ii.

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their government and precious bourgeoisie collapsed like a house of cards. Workmen organized in Red Guards and troops commanded by leaders appointed by a Military Revolutionary Committee quietly went round the various Government establishments, such as the central telephone station, the military staff quarters, etc., and took possession of them, and in the course of the following day the Government was arrested, all Petrograd (and then Moscow) was in the hands of the Bolsheviks, a new Government under the title of Council of People's Commissars was formed, and the great Revolution was accomplished without any bloodshed."

Did M. Litvinov exaggerate the ease with which the Provisional Government was brought crashing to the ground? By no means. White Paper, Cmd. 1240, was equally emphatic. It declared:

"In the course of October the Bolsheviks secured the majority of the Petrograd Soviet. In the first days of November a manifesto was issued by the Soviet signed by two Bolsheviks, Podvoisky and Antonov, calling upon the troops of the Petrograd garrison to rise to the support of the Soviet which the manifesto declared to be in danger. With this manifesto, what is known as the October¹ Revolution may be said to have begun. For two or three days action on both sides was paralysed by fear and uncertainty. The Government were afraid to act because they felt the last shreds of power had slipped from them, the Bolsheviks because they could not bring themselves to believe that the Government were powerless to deal a counterblow against them. Finally, however, they occupied the Government buildings one by one without opposition. The Provisional Government simply melted away."

And Sir George Buchanan sorrowfully related: "Kerensky's Government had fallen, as the Empire had fallen, without a struggle." It is only necessary to record here that Kerensky made a desperate attempt to raise troops and to march on Petrograd, but he completely failed, and he barely escaped, disguised as a sailor, a few days later.

¹ According to the Julian Calendar, which was subsequently discarded by the Bolsheviks, the date was in October. According to the Gregorian Calendar, it was in November.

FROM THE NOVEMBER REVOLUTION TO THE
“NEW ECONOMIC POLICY”

AFTER the Bolsheviks had come into power on November 7, 1917, their opponents, native and foreign, then in Russia, were all agreed on one matter, viz. that Lenin and his colleagues could not maintain themselves in office. The Cadets, Mensheviks, etc., as well as the foreign diplomats and journalists, all declared that the life of the new regime was at most a question of days, perhaps even of hours.

The Bolsheviks believed otherwise; they were convinced that their policy and activities had deep roots in the popular masses, and would be endorsed by the vast majority of the workers, soldiers, and peasants. Their faith was well founded.

On the evening of November 7th, the second All-Russian Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies met in Petrograd. M. Litvinov relates: “The composition of the Congress fully bore out the expectations of the Bolsheviks and allayed the fears of those among them who were inclined to doubt the appropriateness of the time chosen for the revolution. Of the 676 delegates who came from all parts of Russia and were elected on a most democratic basis, no fewer than 390, or more than half, were Bolsheviks, 199 were Social Revolutionaries of the Left; 35 were Internationalist Social Democrats, 21 were Ukrainian Social Democrats, and only 51 belonged to the Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries of the Right. Before the proper proceedings began, these last-named 51 delegates, perceiving the hopelessness of their position, rose to declare that they would have nothing in common with the ‘usurpers’ and left the Congress. The remaining 625 soon found a common basis in their approval of the Bolshevik Revolution, drew up a series of resolutions on peace, land, and a number of other important subjects, elected a new central executive committee

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to act as their standing organ of control and legislation, and approved the formation of a new Government in the form of a Council of People's Commissars (each standing at the head of a permanent committee charged with the administration of various ministries), with Lenin as President. The Bolshevik Revolution thus received the sanction of the workers and the soldiers united in the Soviets."

The Congress, in an appeal to the nation declared:—

"The Provisional Government is deposed. Most of the Provisional Government are already arrested.

"The Soviet authority will at once propose an immediate democratic peace to all nations, and an immediate truce on all fronts. It will assure the free transfer of landlord, crown and monastery lands to the land committees, defend the soldiers' rights, enforcing a complete democratisation of the army, establish workers' control over production, ensure the convocation of the Constituent Assembly at the proper date, take means to supply bread to the cities and articles of first necessity to the villages, and secure to all nationalities living in Russia a real right to independent existence.

"The Congress resolves that all local power shall be transferred to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasant Deputies, which must enforce revolutionary order."¹

The Congress, it may be noted, had been convoked by the old Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, at that time still dominated by Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, but these gentlemen had issued the summonses to the Congress very reluctantly, and mainly because of Bolshevik pressure. The former timid Soviet leaders felt the ground slipping from underneath their feet and they feared that the Congress would decide against their policy and aims. Their uneasiness and the Bolshevik confidence were both well founded.

Up to the date of the November Revolution the Bolshevik leaders had been hunted revolutionaries with little or no experience of practical affairs, and on the morrow of the Revolution they were faced with a strike of the employees of the Government

¹ *Ten Days that Shook the World*, by John Reed.

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offices and banks which their opponents among the autocracy, the landlords, and the bourgeoisie calculated would lead to the immediate collapse of the Government. Cmd. 1240 (1921) contains some very illuminating remarks on this matter. It states:—

“Anti-Bolshevik circles in Petrograd and other parts of Russia seem to have been inspired with the belief that the Bolshevik Government would prove itself no more stable than the Paris Commune of 1871, and would fall from power as rapidly as it had risen to it. The prevalence of this view encouraged various acts of opposition to the Soviet Government. For example, a number of officials in the various ministries and the staffs of the banks and other credit institutions in the capital struck work by way of protest against the Bolsheviks and the violent means by which they had seized power. This strike of the bank staffs was financed by some of the prominent industrial magnates in Petrograd. The difficulties of the Bolsheviks in providing for the carrying on of the administration were thereby greatly multiplied. At the same time their numerical strength was not great, and the number of those among them capable of filling administrative posts with efficiency was smaller still.”

All this created very grave dangers for the new Government, but aided by its supporters among the masses of the people it overcame these formidable difficulties.

The Bolsheviks were now in power and, to the satisfaction of their supporters and to the annoyance of their opponents, they proceeded forthwith to apply the programme which they had advocated in opposition. They had promised peace, and they immediately began to implement their pledge.

Their object was not a separate peace with Germany. Their aim was a general peace, and they strove with every means at their disposal to effect a general peace. However, when it became clear that the Allies would not participate in the negotiations and that the working-class movement in Germany was not strong enough to overthrow the Kaiser’s Government, then and only then did they decide to sign a separate peace with the Central Powers.

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed March 3, 1918, met with considerable opposition within Russia. Lenin himself, anxious

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though he was to obtain a “breathing space” for the Revolution, waited until the allied representatives in Russia admitted that they could not pledge the support of their respective Governments in the event of the Bolshevik Government refusing to ratify the Treaty, before he decided to recommend the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets to ratify it. Lenin’s policy carried the day by a majority vote, and among certain sections in Russia it was very unpopular. The Left Socialist Revolutionaries withdrew from the Government, and the vast majority of the trade union leaders were against ratification. Lenin and his colleagues were convinced of the correctness of their policy, because owing to the exhausted state of the country a breathing space was an absolute necessity to the new regime.

It is necessary to explain here briefly the attitude of Lenin and his friends towards the question of the Constituent Assembly. The establishment of that institution had been in the programmes of all the Russian Socialist Parties, including the Bolsheviks. The last-named, however, did not regard the Constituent Assembly as the final form of the executive authority of a socialist regime. They were Marxists. They knew that parliamentary government as then practised in Western Europe had arisen as a result of the struggle on the one hand between a rising trading and manufacturing class, and on the other the old landed aristocracy and absolutism. They contended that when the basis of society was revolutionized, when classes were abolished, that the social structure, including, of course, the governmental organs of legislation and administration, would of necessity also be changed fundamentally.

The Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, as already mentioned, argued that the Revolution was a bourgeois Revolution, that it should remain as such, and that therefore all power should be vested in a Constituent Assembly, in a Russian bourgeois-democratic parliament.

Lenin, on the other hand, contended that the Revolution had been made by the workers and soldiers, that the bourgeoisie, through

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its political representatives, the Cadets, had placed themselves at the head only after the Revolution had been successful, that the workers, soldiers, and peasants, through the Soviets, should have taken control of the Revolution and established a Socialist Republic, whose executive would be not a Constituent Assembly, but an all-Russian Congress of Soviets.

As already mentioned, when Lenin returned to Petrograd in April 1917, he at once advocated, not the summoning of a Constituent Assembly, but the establishment of a Soviet Republic. He realized that a bourgeois-democratic parliament was an immense advance on Tsarist absolutism, but he argued that a Soviet Republic was an enormous advance on bourgeois democracy. To quote his own words: "While demanding the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, revolutionary Social Democracy has from the very beginning of the Revolution of 1917, repeatedly emphasized that a republic of Soviets is a higher form of democracy than the ordinary bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly."¹

Although firmly convinced that in essence the Constituent Assembly could not but be antagonistic to a Soviet Republic, Lenin, Stalin, and their followers, without lessening their advocacy for the formation of a Soviet Republic, nevertheless, for the time being, supported the demand for the immediate convocation of the Constituent Assembly by the Provisional Government. Lenin and Stalin—unlike Trotsky and a number of Bolsheviks, as well as those whom Lenin called semi- or quarter-Bolsheviks—did so with their eyes open. They maintained that in view of the fact that the idea of the Constituent Assembly was extremely popular among the masses, it was necessary to give these masses direct experience of the nature of the Constituent Assembly to prove its unwillingness, its impotence, to grant the demands of the masses for "land," "peace," and "All power to the Soviets." Explaining why they did not from the first boycott the Constituent Assembly, Lenin, amongst other things, said:

"Even a few days before the victory of the Soviet Republic,

¹ *Selected Works*, No. 6.

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even *after* this victory, participation in a bourgeois democratic parliament not only does no harm to the revolutionary proletariat, but facilitates the demonstration to the more backward masses the reason why such parliaments deserve to be dissolved, it facilitates the process of dissolution, and it facilitates the political withering away of the bourgeois parliament.”¹

However, now that the Bolsheviks had come into power and their action had been endorsed by the Second Congress of the Soviets, the very people who had earlier repeatedly postponed the summoning of the Constituent Assembly, began clamouring for its convocation.

The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, having established “a new government of the Russian Republic under the form of the Council of People’s Commissars,” were no longer so keen on calling the Constituent Assembly, although they had previously denounced the Provisional Government for not convoking it.

In addition, the lists of candidates for the Constituent Assembly had been issued in October 1917, before the November Revolution, and before the split in the ranks of the party of the Social Revolutionaries; the lists appeared as though that party was still united on a common programme. There was therefore utter confusion throughout the peasant areas as to the policy for which the various candidates stood.

Lenin as usual was clear-headed. He said: “We must postpone the elections. We must enlarge the suffrage by giving it to those who are eighteen years old. We must make possible a new arrangement of the electoral lists.” He was outvoted by his colleagues, and the elections took place on November 25, 1917, on the lists presented in October 1917.

Under all these circumstances, the results were not surprising. In a House of 715 deputies, the Bolsheviks had 183 members, the Left Socialist Revolutionaries 30, the Right Socialist Revolutionaries about 380; the remainder consisted of Mensheviks, Cadets, etc. This meant that among the Socialist deputies there was a

¹ *Left Wing Communism—an Infantile Disorder.*

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substantial majority for the policy which the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionary leaders had pursued up till November 6, 1917, but which had been overwhelmingly rejected by the Soviet Congress on November 7-8, 1917.

Which institution better represented the mind of the country? There could only be one answer: the Soviets, because of their greater flexibility, and because of the method and the circumstances under which the delegates had been elected. In the meantime, as the significance of the November Revolution spread throughout the country, it was hailed by the army and peasantry, not in mere words, but in deeds. To quote Lenin: "The Revolution spread to the entire army and the peasantry, and manifested itself, first of all, in the dismissal of the leading bodies (army committees, gubernia, and peasant committees, the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, etc.), which expressed the superseded compromising stage of the Revolution, its bourgeois and not proletarian stage, and which were inevitably bound to disappear as a result of the pressure of the lower and broader masses of the people, and the election of new ones."¹

The Constituent Assembly met on January 18, 1918. The Bolshevik members submitted a resolution to accept the Soviet Government and its policy respecting peace, land, and workers' control. The Assembly refused even to discuss this proposal, and went on talking into the early hours of the morning of January 19, 1918, when a sailor turned out the lights after he had told the members that they had talked enough, that the guards were tired, and that it was time to go to bed. Next day, January 20th, the Soviet Government decreed the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly.

Was this decision resented by the country? That well-known Press correspondent, Mr. Arthur Ransome, writing from Moscow shortly afterwards, averred: "The question was put at a moment of extreme difficulty, when acceptance of the Constituent Assembly would have relieved the Bolsheviks (at the New Year) of tremen-

¹ *Selected Works*, No. 6.

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dous responsibility. It would have been an easy way out for cowards. But the Bolsheviks were not afraid of responsibility, were not looking for easy ways out, were confident that the whole of the active, conscious population was behind them, and swept the Assembly aside. Not anywhere in Russia did the indifferent mass stir in protest. The Assembly died like the Tsardom, and the coalition before it. Not any one of the three showed in the manner of its dying that it retained any right to live."¹

Mr. Ransome did not exaggerate. On the contrary, the action of the Government was emphatically confirmed by a much more representative Congress, the third All-Russian Congress of Soviets, some days later. To quote Litvinov: "The real Constituent Assembly of the proletarian-peasant Republic of the Soviets met a week later, when the third All-Russian Congress of the Soviets assembled, and was soon joined by the All-Russian Congress of Peasant Delegates. Both of them endorsed by an overwhelming majority the policy and the actions of the Council of People's Commissars, and elected a joint Central Executive Committee to represent permanently the labouring masses of the Russian nation, and to act as the supreme legislative and controlling authority. Their political complexion showed better than anything else could that the Constituent Assembly, which contained a majority against the Bolsheviks, had not faithfully reflected the real mind of the people."

This Congress, on January 27, 1918, accepted the famous declaration of the rights of the toiling and exploited peoples. It began with the words: "Russia is declared a republic of workers', soldiers', and peasants' Soviets. The whole central and local authority rests with Soviets. The Russian Soviet Republic is declared a free alliance of free nations and a federation of national republics."

On the following day a decree was passed annulling the debts of the former Imperial and Provisional Governments, and on February 19, 1918, another decree was accepted socializing the land.

¹ *The New Republic* (U.S.A.).

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This decree provided for the abolition of private property in land; the establishment of different units of holdings in different parts of the country; the equalization of the units in each district; the abolition of the right to rent or lease land.

The decree, even at this early date, visualized and encouraged collective agriculture, and some of the best estates, as well as some devoted to special crops, were not split up.

The Government, despite the difficult situation confronting them, lost no time in continuing to apply their Socialist principles. Workers' control in the factories and workshops was instituted two days after the "November Revolution." Mr. Philips Price, then *Manchester Guardian* correspondent in Russia, wrote:

"The decree gave the men's committees the right to examine the books, countersign orders, and control the precincts of the factories. In each industrial district a joint Council of Shop-Stewards' Committees and Professional Alliances was formed, so as to co-ordinate policy and prevent conflict between industry and craft. The workers in this stage of the revolution did not yet think of going beyond the stage of effectively controlling the capitalist. They did not feel themselves strong enough at this moment to take over and work the industries of the country. The economic apparatus for production and distribution on a public basis had not yet been prepared, and meanwhile the proletariat had not the technical staff at its disposal. The latter was to a large extent still under the influence of the capitalists, and thus the proletariat was in danger of economic isolation. It was, however, possible by the establishment of workers' control to go one step beyond the point reached by the March revolution."¹

However, owing to the opposition of the owners and the strike action of the technical staff, this policy did not work out successfully, and from January to May 1918 decrees were issued nationalizing specific business enterprises, the commercial fleet, foreign trade, etc., and on June 28th general nationalization of industrial and commercial undertakings, with certain exceptions, was decreed.

But the Soviet Government did not limit itself to mere nationalization. The basis of the State Planning, which has subsequently

¹ *Capitalist Europe and Socialist Russia.*

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transformed the face of a continent, was laid in January 1918, when the Supreme Council of National Economy was established. Mr. Philips Price related:

"I well remember being present at its first meeting. A few workmen from the Petrograd and Moscow professional alliances and shop-stewards' committees, together with some trusted revolutionary leaders and a few technical advisers who were not sabotaging, met together on the Tuchkov Naberejnaya at Petrograd with the object of organizing the economic life of the republic in the interests of the toiling masses. The task before them seemed superhuman. All around them was chaos, produced by the imperialist war and the orgy of capitalist profiteering. Famine, dearth of raw materials, sabotage of technical staffs, counter-revolutionary bands invading from the south, Prussian war lords threatening from the west made the outlook apparently hopeless. Yet, nothing daunted, these brave workmen with no experience, except that derived from the hard school of wage slavery and political oppression, set to work to reconstitute the economic life of a territory covering a large part of two continents. I saw them at that meeting draw up plans for the creation of public departments which should take over the production and distribution of the 'key' industries and the transport. Their field of vision ran from the forests of Lithuania to the oases of Central Asia, from the fisheries of the White Sea to the oilfields of the Caucasus.

"As they discussed these schemes, one was forcibly reminded that their plans to fight famine and re-establish peaceful industry were at that moment threatened by counter-revolutionary forces and by the armed hosts of the European warlords, whose so-called 'interests' demanded that famine, anarchy, and misery should teach the workers and peasants of Russia not to dare to lift their hands against the sacred 'rights of property.' And the wind howled round that cold stone building which looked over the frozen Neva, and the winter snows were driving down the dismal streets, but these men, fired with imagination and buoyed up by courage, did not waver. They were planting an acorn which they knew would one day grow into an oak.

"I saw them five months later at a big conference in Moscow. The Supreme Council of Public Economy had now become a great State institution, and was holding its first All-Russian Conference. In every province in Central Russia and in many parts of the outer marches local branches had been formed and had sent their representatives. The first organ in the world for carrying out in practice the theory that each citizen is part of a great human family and has rights in that family, in

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so far as he performs duties to it, was being visibly created before my eyes in Russia. In the midst of the clash of arms, the roar of the imperialist slaughter on the battlefields of France, the savagery of the civil war with Krasnov on the Don and with the Czechoslovaks on the Volga, the Supreme Council of Public Economy was silently becoming the centre of the new economic life of the republic. It had been created while the more prominent political body, the Soviet, was struggling to preserve the existence of the republic from enemies within and without.”¹

As regards the land—the aim of the Soviet Government in transferring the land of the big estate owners, etc., to the peasants was not merely the enlargement of the peasant holdings; their aim was the development of agriculture on scientific and Socialist principles, but they knew that this could only be achieved by demonstrating to the peasants concretely the superiority of the collectivist over the individualist method of agriculture. The task was extremely difficult owing to the cultural backwardness of the peasants.

The eye-witness, Mr. Philips Price, from whom we have already quoted, wrote:

“Under section 2 of the land law a scheme was drawn up which provided for the order in which land allotments should be made. First in the scale came the State land departments, local and central, and public organizations working under their control. They were to be the first to have the right to withhold land from distribution among the peasants, in order to open experimental stations, intensive cultivation farms, or to run the domain homesteads for purposes of general public utility. Next in order came private societies and associations, and here preference was given to the ‘labour commune,’ i.e. to groups of peasants or urban workers’ families who should agree to work with common live stock and by common labour a given tract of land, to divide the products for their families and the profits from their sales in common. These new forms of communes were really large farms organized on a co-operative basis, both for production and consumption. They were admirably suited for the work of taking over the landlords’ domains and the home farms and for providing, under control of the State food department, the necessary agricultural produce for the urban population.”²

¹ *Capitalist Europe and Socialist Russia.*

² *Ibid.*

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Unfortunately, owing to the attitude of the peasants at this early stage, all the land could not be administered and worked in this way. He continued:

“Next in order came the old Russian peasant commune, which could, after the former categories had been satisfied, receive additions to the old allotments, which had been parcelled out in 1861. This old type of commune represents a much more archaic system of husbandry—a system under which the land is divided equally, but each family maintains its separate stock and farms independent of its neighbours. It has the disadvantage of splitting up the land into small isolated patches with the object of preventing any member of the commune from obtaining advantage over another member. It has none of the advantages of a common system of husbandry. The new land law thus did everything to encourage the new type of commune and to discourage the ‘old.’ ”¹

However, even in the early months after the November Revolution considerable progress was registered. Mr. Price stated:

“During the course of the summer of 1918 many hundreds of the new type were created in the central provinces by soldiers and sailors discharged from the old army, by skilled urban workers who, as a result of the famine in industrial raw products, had been thrown out of work, and by the half-peasant half-proletarian who had insufficient land allotments and who during the war had lost his live stock and the means to cultivate on his own. . . .

“This half-peasant half-proletarian became the advance guard of the revolutionary army educating the backward peasantry in the remote rural districts during the summer of 1918.”²

However, these developments met with considerable opposition in the villages from the *Kulaks* (rich peasants), inspired and financed by the “Allied” representatives then in Russia. Fortunately the Soviet Government immediately faced up to the situation. “Committees of the Poorer Peasantry” were established in all the rural areas “which should stop,” to quote Mr. Philips Price, “the more well-to-do elements of the rural population from anarchically breaking up the great estates among themselves and from plundering the domain farms; which should organize the

¹ *Capitalist Europe and Socialist Russia.*

² *Ibid.*

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new types of communes, and should teach the peasantry in the hard school of discipline that they had responsibilities to the revolution as well as privileges.”¹

Their task was not easy, but they steadily won through. Mr. Price concluded: “Little by little during the summer of 1918 these committees grew in the western and central provinces. They got their members elected on to the local Soviets, removed speculators and the rich farmer element that had crept into them, took over the administration of the corn requisitioning, and began to establish the new labour communes.” Despite the attacks of the “Whites” equipped and financed by both German and Allied Governments, despite foreign armed intervention and the blockade, the Soviet Government began to lay the industrial and agricultural foundations of what is now the powerful Soviet Union.

Revolutionary Constitutional changes were also inaugurated on July 10, 1918, when the fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets adopted the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. (Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic).

A short explanation of the structure of the Soviets at that time may not be out of place. To begin at the base. The smallest unit was the village Soviet, and the next in order the volost Soviet. The volost Soviet was somewhat similar to a British Rural District Council.

The next in the scale above the volost was the uyezd, which was somewhat analogous to an English shire, but the members of the uyezd Soviet included not only the representatives of all the volosts in the district, but also representatives of all the towns in the uyezd with populations not exceeding 10,000 each.

Next in order was the gubernia Soviet, comprised of representatives of each uyezd, together with representatives of each town in the province with populations of over 10,000, but less than 25,000, one representative being elected for every 2,000 inhabitants.

The top of the pyramid was the All-Russian Congress of Soviets

¹ *Capitalist Europe and Socialist Russia.*

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comprised of representatives of the gubernia Soviets and of towns of 25,000 inhabitants and upwards. The towns of 25,000 inhabitants and upwards were entitled to send one representative to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets for every 25,000 inhabitants, but the rural districts in each province were entitled to only one representative for every 125,000 inhabitants.

Under Article 12 of the Constitution supreme authority in the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic was vested in the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, and, during the period between the Congresses, in the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets.

The Central Executive Committee¹ in turn appointed the Council of People's Commissars who were in effect the ministers of the various departments. To quote the relevant articles of the Constitution:

Art. 37.—With the Council of People's Commissars rests the general direction of the affairs of the Republic.

Art. 38.—With this object the Council of People's Commissars issues decrees, orders, and instructions: and takes all general measures necessary to secure prompt and orderly administration.

Art. 39.—The Council of People's Commissars immediately informs the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of all its orders and decisions.

Art. 40.—The All-Russian Central Executive Committee has the right to annul or suspend any decision or order of the Council of People's Commissars.

The Council of People's Commissars and the Central Executive Committee were responsible to the All-Russian Congress of

¹ The All-Russian Central Executive Committee appoints the Council of People's Commissars for the general direction of the affairs of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic; it also appoints the various departments (People's Commissariats), which direct the various branches of administration. The members of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee themselves work in the departments (People's Commissariats), or undertake special work for the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. (Articles 35-36 of the Constitution.)

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Soviets, which, under the Constitution, had to meet "at least twice a year." (Article 26.)

The village Soviets were elected on the basis of one member for every hundred inhabitants, but the total of representatives thus elected could not be less than three or more than fifty. The village Soviet elected an Executive Committee, and the Soviet had to meet not less than twice a week.

The volost Soviets were elected by the representatives of all the village Soviets in each volost. The volost Soviet elected an Executive Committee. The volost Soviet had to meet not less than once a month, and was summoned by the Executive Committee.

The uyezd Soviets consisted of representatives of the volost and town Soviets in each uyezd. The uyezd Soviets elected an Executive Committee, which had to summon a meeting of the uyezd Soviet every three months.

The gubernia Soviet was composed of representatives of the uyezd and town Soviets in each gubernia. The gubernia Soviet elected an Executive Committee, which was responsible for summoning a meeting of the gubernia Soviet once every three months.

Each village, volost, uyezd, and gubernia Soviet was the highest authority in its locality, but the village Soviet had to subordinate its action to the volost Soviet, the volost to the uyezd, the uyezd to the gubernia, and the gubernia to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

The town Soviets were elected on the basis of one member for each 1,000 inhabitants. Each town Soviet elected an Executive Committee, which had to convene a meeting of the town Soviet not less than once a week.

Deputies to the village, volost, uyezd, gubernia, and town Soviets were elected for a period of three months. All Soviet citizens who had attained the age of eighteen years, and who obtained their livelihood by productive and socially useful labour, or were the dependants of such persons, were entitled to vote and to be elected to the Soviets.

Soviet citizens who used hired labour or lived on investments,

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as well as private traders, priests, and officials and agents of the former police, gendarmes, and secret police were excluded from the franchise.

So much for the structure of the Soviets. By the end of April 1918 the new Government was firmly in the saddle, and was enthusiastically backed by the vast majority of the workers, soldiers, and peasants. Had the Central Powers and the Allies left the Russian people alone to solve their problems in their own way, the Soviets would have been able to apply themselves forthwith to a steady reconstruction of the country on socialist lines.

Unfortunately for Russia and for the world at large, the Central Powers maintained in authority anti-Soviet administrations in the Don, the Ukraine, and Georgia. The Allied Governments landed troops in Murmansk and Archangel, who overthrew by violence the local Soviet administrations and set up an anti-Soviet "Government." They also landed troops at Vladivostok who, jointly with the Czechoslovak troops (then being evacuated along the Trans-Siberian railway, by arrangement with the Soviet Government, to Vladivostok *en route* for Europe), overthrew the local Soviet authorities and set up anti-Soviet administrations.

Apart from the appalling loss of life, all this prevented the production of goods of which Russia stood in such dire need. Cmd. 1240 stated: "In the summer of 1918 the outbreak of civil war, accompanied by foreign intervention, caused the Soviet Government to divert to military purposes all its energy and the residue of Russia's industrial capacity. In these circumstances the collapse of all other than war industry became complete."

At the end of the world war the Central Powers withdrew their troops, but the Allied Governments poured in military supplies of all kinds through Archangel, the Black Sea ports, and Vladivostok to aid the counter-revolutionary generals, whose aim was the restoration of Tsardom. Great Britain alone, on the authority of its then Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, spent £100,000,000 in aiding the "White" Forces. It was all in vain. The Soviets' half-trained, ill-equipped, and often ragged troops defeated the

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better trained, better equipped, and well-clothed troops of the counter-revolutionaries and the Allied Governments, on the shores of the White Sea and on the plains of Siberia and Southern Russia.

The Tsarists' last "White Hope," General Wrangel, was driven into the Black Sea. His last contingents evacuated the Crimea on November 16, 1920.

In addition, between November 1918 and April 1920 the Allied Governments poured munitions and instructors into Poland to enable the latter to join in the general attack on the young struggling workers' Republic. On April 25, 1920, the newly equipped and well-supplied Polish army began an advance on Kiev, which they entered on May 7, 1920. The Allied Governments were urged in their respective parliaments to intervene and prevent further hostilities. They refused on the grounds that it was a matter affecting solely Poland and Russia. The tide turned quickly. On June 12th the Poles evacuated Kiev, and by the end of the month the entire Polish army was in retreat on a 500-mile front. In the first week of August 1920 the Red Army was advancing on Warsaw. The Allied Governments performed an immediate *volte-face*. The Russo-Polish war was no longer a purely Russo-Polish affair, but suddenly became a vital concern for the stability of Europe. They threatened that if the Soviet forces did not halt their advance the Allies would give Poland every support. The clouds of a European war rapidly gathered. Over the week-end, August 8, 1920, the issue of war and peace hung in the balance. Organized Labour in Britain in the fateful days August 6th to 9th threw its powerful weight into the scales against war, and forced the balance down emphatically on the side of peace.

By August 14, 1920, the Red Army was at the gates of Warsaw, but it had advanced ahead of its commissariat, and made several other tactical mistakes. The Poles handed over the command of their forces to the French General Weygand. The Red Army was defeated when Warsaw seemed within its grasp and had to retreat rapidly. On October 12, 1920, an armistice and preliminary peace terms were signed at Riga between Poland and Soviet Russia.

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During the following months considerable efforts were made within Poland by Russian "Whites" and other reactionary elements to induce Warsaw to use the winter and spring months to prepare another attack against Russia, but the Polish Government's position *vis-à-vis* Russia was by then much weaker—owing to the elimination of Wrangel—than in April 1920, and it would not risk a second gamble.

When the New Year dawned in the R.S.F.S.R. on January 1, 1921, the Civil War was over, and foreign armed intervention in European Russia was at an end. However, Japanese troops remained in occupation of the Maritime Province of Eastern Siberia till October 1922.

But over six years of war and civil war had exhausted the country, and the price which the workers and peasants of Russia had to pay for victory during the three years of civil war was tremendous. Cmd. 1240 in measured language stated: "We doubt whether so much human misery as has existed in Russia during the last three years has ever been the lot of any people within so short a time in the history of the modern world." The strain directly imposed and the chronic malnutrition indirectly engendered by the war, civil war, and foreign armed intervention had played havoc with the health of the Russian people.

The deliberate destruction both by the Allied troops and the "Whites" as they retreated of industrial plants, sawmills, mining equipment, bridges, etc., had brought the industrial life of the country to a very low ebb.

The Allies and the "Whites" had also done their utmost to affect seriously, for the time being, agricultural production. They had destroyed equipment, buildings of all kinds, and slaughtered cattle wholesale. In addition, the pressing demand for foodstuffs had led to a catastrophic decrease in the cultivation of industrial plants, flax, cotton, etc., whilst the destruction of flocks and herds meant a serious falling off in wool and hides.

In addition, the Allies and the "Whites" also destroyed to the utmost of their powers the means of transport and communication.

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That well-known and respected British journalist, Mr. Walter Meakin, who accompanied the official Labour Delegation to Russia in the spring of 1920, writing in the *Daily News* of July 14th, of the same year, stated: "The damage to railways and rolling-stock during all these operations was enormous, and the task which faced Krassin, Sverdlov, Lomonosov, and Pavlovitch (all technical experts with high qualifications), when they set about the work of reconstruction, after the various forces had been driven back, would have appalled most men."

The Soviet Government was master of the republic, but the enormous amount of repair and reconstruction work which had to be done to re-establish the shattered economic life of the country may be gauged by the facts that at this date industrial production equalled only 20 per cent and agricultural from 33 per cent to 40 per cent of the pre-war levels. In addition, when the Russian peasants were preparing for the spring ploughing in 1921, they had less than three million ploughs, and these were well-worn ones, instead of the seven to eight million which they had had in 1914.

New drastic measures were needed to increase production, even if these involved a temporary general retreat from the application of socialist principles.

Lenin, as usual, with characteristic courage faced the realities, drew correct conclusions, and fearlessly urged them on the Bolshevik Party, with the result that the tenth Party Congress between the dates March 8-16, 1921, adopted a series of decisions which became known as the "New Economic Policy," or, for short, "N.E.P.," and a number of decrees establishing this policy were subsequently issued. Under these decrees a tax in kind was levied on the peasants instead of requisitioning, and the various industries were formed into separate trusts, some being let to co-operatives, companies, and private individuals, all under the control of the Supreme Council of National Economy.

The reason for these changes briefly was that when the land was given to the peasants they were expected to hand over their surplus

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grain to the State, and the latter was to supply them with agricultural implements and manufactured goods in general use. The surplus grain was requisitioned, but the Government, for reasons already explained, was not able to supply the manufactured goods, with the result that it was very difficult for the peasants, owing to lack of agricultural implements, horses, and cattle, to raise as much grain, vegetables, flax, etc., as in pre-war days, quite apart from the fact that there was little direct incentive for them to raise more than was necessary to cover their own needs. As Lenin with much truth said, they had taken the grain from the peasants in exchange for "paper money."

Cmd. 1240 in greater detail declared:

"Agricultural machinery and implements, and manufactured articles in universal use had chiefly been imported into Russia from abroad. The peasant was no longer able to obtain these articles in exchange for the paper currency he received for his agricultural produce. It is therefore claimed that the incentive to maintain in cultivation the former area of land under corn and crops, and to bring to the towns the surplus fruits of this cultivation, has been largely removed from the peasants. The evidence in our possession, and notably that of a witness, who has worked for many years in the co-operative societies in the North-West Provinces, and has come into direct contact with the life of the villages, inclined us to conclude that the influence of the blockade was chiefly felt in this direction. We agree, therefore, that the blockade accentuated the difficulties of the Soviet Government in relation to the peasantry, and we are prepared fully to take into account the effect of these difficulties upon the life of the towns, which are entirely dependent upon the villages for corn and other agricultural produce."

And as regards nationalized industries—nationalization had been carried out under the stress of the civil war more rapidly than had been purposed at first; under the new decrees the Government intended that each trust should be self-supporting, and the authorities hoped to induce the former owners and their technical experts, who were hostile to the new regime, to work honestly to increase production by leasing to them a number of the enterprises, and offering them responsible positions in the trusts.

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The dangers involved in this policy were clearly seen. One Bolshevik leader remarked, and his sentiments were widely shared, that they suffered from a "lack of cadres, of industrial managers of proletarian origin," and that therefore they were compelled to give leading positions to "hostile elements," who would "persistently betray us" unless carefully watched. These suspicions were only too well founded as subsequent developments demonstrated.

However, although the Bolshevik leaders had had to make a big strategic retreat, which was misunderstood and misrepresented at home and abroad, they were still masters of the State mechanism, and they were still firmly in control of "the commanding heights," and by the establishment on February 22, 1921, of the State Planning Commission, which embraced every sphere of the economic life of the country, they had set up the machinery, jointly with the work of other Government departments, for a big advance at a later date, which would much more than recover the lost ground. That date was not nearly so far distant as many observers, native and foreign, then thought.

In closing this chapter it is necessary to deal very briefly with the financial position of the R.S.F.S.R. at the beginning of 1921. In the spring of 1917 the budgetary position was extremely difficult. Income was estimated at 9,000,000,000 roubles and expenditure at 31,000,000,000 roubles, leaving a deficit of 22,000,000,000 roubles, and at the date of the November Revolution the position was even more chaotic.

From 1918-20, i.e. during the years of blockade, foreign armed intervention and civil war, the currency, as one would naturally expect, depreciated still more rapidly, and the condition of the State finances subsequently became catastrophic. Finally, in large measure, money taxes were superseded by taxes in kind, and money wages were superseded by the free supply of provisions, housing accommodation, travel, social services, etc.

But when N.E.P. was introduced the foundations were also laid for a balanced budget and a stable currency. To the surprise

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of many observers the building was completed, as we shall learn in later chapters, in the relatively short period of three years.

The New Economic Policy did not herald the return to capitalism and the victory of the peasants over the revolution, as critics of the Soviets cheerfully declared at that time; that policy only constituted a strategic retreat, and the results of that policy, coupled with other measures taken by the Soviet Government in 1918, 1919, 1920, and in the spring of 1921, eventually enabled the Soviet Government not only to advance on a wide front, but to sweep forward at a rate which later astonished the world.

FROM N.E.P. TO DECEMBER 1924

IN the concluding part of the last chapter we dealt with the condition to which Soviet Russia had been reduced when N.E.P. was introduced.

Not unnaturally, many observers asked would Russia be able to recover without foreign assistance? This was not surprising, because all the defeated nations on the Continent, and the new States which had arisen as a result of the peace treaties, were appealing to London, Paris, and New York for long-term loans.

The compilers of the White Paper, Cmd. 1240, from which we have already quoted, answered in the negative. They declared: "It is our conviction that there is no possibility of the economic regeneration of Russia in the near future without the assistance of capitalist countries." Had Lord Emmett and his colleagues been able to penetrate six months into the future, their negative would have been much louder, because in the autumn and spring of 1921-22 the great Volga Valley grain area was afflicted with the severest drought in living recollection, which resulted in a calamitous famine that cost from three to five million lives.¹

Yet, thanks to the ability and drive of the Soviet Government, coupled with the creative abilities of the workers and peasants released by the November Revolution, the country reached the pre-war level of production by 1926, and by 1937 the new Russia had become the leading manufacturing country in Europe.

One usually refers to the years beginning with the spring of 1921 as the years of restoration, but this term does less than justice to what was being done, because in addition to restoration work, the foundations of new enterprises and institutions affecting every

¹ Dr. Nansen, who had much to do with the relief organizations, wrote that the famine "caused at least the loss of three million lives." The official Trade Union Delegation which visited the country in 1924 estimated the loss at five millions.

sphere of human activity, cultural as well as material, were being laid.

This was clearly seen by competent observers; the Moscow correspondent of the *Observer* (May 25, 1924) wrote: "To-day one can see clearly the unmistakable contours of the new State. 'Development in Russia,' said a foreign observer to me, 'has now become organic. The muscles are not all working or even properly developed, while the organism is still feverish. But the skeleton of the new State is clearly apparent, and the body is beginning to function.'"

To begin with agriculture—as already explained, a tax on agricultural produce had been substituted for requisitions; this tax amounted to about 10 per cent of the gross production, as compared with 30 per cent under Tsardom. The Government had helped the peasants with agricultural implements and seeds. In addition, some thousands of tractors had been imported from the U.S.A., and others were produced in their own Putilov works in Leningrad. Villages joined together in co-operatives to purchase tractors which they used for communal ploughing. The peasant was permitted to sell his surplus products on the market. Gradually the area of land under cultivation grew from 63·5 million dessiatines in 1922 to 70,000,000 in 1923, and to 75·5 million in 1924, as compared with about 95·7 million in 1913. Further, model farms were established to inculcate scientific methods of agriculture, as well as modern methods of horse-breeding and cattle-raising.

The British Trade Union Congress Delegation which visited the U.S.S.R. in 1924 averred: "Russian agriculture is recovering slowly but steadily, and the Government help which is being given seems energetic and efficient."

This was reflected in the mood of the peasants. Mr. W. Craven Llewellyn (then Liberal Candidate for Chester), on returning from Russia in September 1924, wrote: "The peasants seemed to me to be very happy. They just do not worry about the revolution, about Bolshevism, or any other 'ism.' They are allowed to build their own houses in the forests, in which life is quite comfortable.

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Travelling through the fields in the early morning one can hear the peasant girls singing their folk songs quite happily.”¹

Hard as was the problem of agricultural recovery, that of industrial was much more arduous because it was much more difficult in this sphere, without the aid of foreign loans, to repair the damage done by the “Whites” and foreign interventionists. Recovery was slow and by no means regular in all industries. However, by the end of 1924, coal production was 52 per cent of the pre-war; metal (manufactured) 25 per cent.; linen 119·5 per cent, and industry as a whole 42 per cent of pre-war.

Under all the circumstances this was no mean achievement. The British Trade Union Congress (1924) Delegation reported: “The proportion of present production to pre-war compares very well with that of other Continental countries, and the superior energy and efficiency developed by the novel machinery of the Soviet Government compensates to some extent for the want of capital.”

The “novel machinery” here referred to was the State Planning Commission, the “Gosplan,” consisting of two hundred experts who, in co-operation with the competent departments, co-ordinated the activities of all branches of the recovering national economy. As already mentioned, from March 1921 onwards, the nationalized enterprises were gradually placed under the administration of State Trusts, a special charter being drafted and sanctioned in each separate case. In order, however, to unify the principles and policies underlying the construction and working of these State Trusts, the “Decree of State Industrial Undertakings working on a Commercial Basis (Trusts)” was passed on April 10, 1923.

Under this Decree each Trust was formed by the Supreme Economic Council, but after its formation had to be conducted on a solvent basis, for which the Board of Directors of each Trust was held responsible, and the relations between the Trusts and the trade unions were regulated by current legislation. The Trusts, like other employers, were compelled to observe strictly the provisions of the code of labour laws.

¹ *Daily News*, September 16, 1924.

The authorities realized the urgent necessity to introduce a balanced budget, but in 1921 no budget could be drafted as the structure of the State Economy was undergoing radical changes, i.e. returning to a monetary system. An "experimental budget" was introduced for the first nine months of 1922 which had to be revised three times. The next budget, 1922-23 (October 1, 1922, to September 30, 1923) was covered to the extent of 29.5 per cent by the issue of paper money, but the budget, 1924-25, was balanced. A decree was issued prohibiting, as from August 1, 1924, the issuing of paper money for budgeting purposes.

Mr. Arthur Ransome, on returning from Russia in August 1924, wrote:

"I asked the Commissar of Finance to tell me in what precisely, from his point of view, the money reform consisted. He replied at once: 'In the fact that the budget is now in order.' He does not mean by that that his budget would satisfy Mr. Snowden, but simply that it has been brought from the region of fantastic fairy tale into that in which normal financiers can at least understand each other. It is now a budget capable of being critically examined, and no longer a mere lamentable account of the Russian means of temporizing with the deluge by the addition of ever-increasing floods of paper money. Hitherto they were never able to see more than a month ahead, and often had to bring in supplementary estimates and set the printing press working overtime after a fortnight. Now they have a three-monthly budget, and at the end of this month the Commissar of Finance will have the personal triumph of introducing the first budget to cover a whole year, and a budget in which, he believes, they will be able to cover their deficit without the issue of fairy gold in the shape of paper money."¹

Equal success was registered in connection with the currency. The State Bank was founded in October 1921, and at the end of 1922 preliminary steps were taken to establish a new stable currency, the chervonetz. For a time two currencies existed side by side, the new chervonetz and the old Soviet roubles; but the Government decreed, March 10, 1924, the suspension of the latter and their redemption up to May 1, 1924, at the rate of fifty thousand to the chervonetz.

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, August 26, 1924.

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By the end of the financial year, 1923-24, the U.S.S.R. had a balanced budget and a stable currency. These were no mean achievements, and excited the unwilling admiration of some bitter critics of the Soviets abroad. For instance, the late Mr. Leslie Urquhart, Chairman of the Russo-Asiatic Consolidated, Ltd., at a general meeting of the company, December 18, 1924, declared:

"It would be unreasonable not to admit that during the last three years since the declaration of the so-called new economic policy¹ in Russia, financial and economic conditions there have made some progress towards recovery. In this connection the admirable work done by the Commissariat of Finance, despite the appalling difficulties which had to be overcome in its efforts to balance the State Budget and stabilize currency, compels the admiration of every unprejudiced person.

"It required no mean effort of courage and of vision, in the condition of industrial and financial chaos² in which the country found itself only a short time ago, gradually to replace the produce of the printing press by the proceeds of taxation and revenue, and to succeed in the provisional State Budget of the current year not only to make both ends meet, but to do so without reverting to inflation.

"... the Commissariat of Finance is run on lines that would command the respect and approval of the most conservative capitalist Government."

Although under the N.E.P. the Government permitted private production and the free exchange of goods, it sought to influence production and internal trade through State and co-operative producing and trading organizations. In other words, the Soviet Government permitted the private manufacturers and traders to help increase the country's production and internal trade in a critical period, but it kept a tight grip on the reins. Even in the economic year 1923-24, only two years after the introduction of the N.E.P., the State-owned industries accounted for 63.5 per

¹ The "New Economic Policy" was adopted by the tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, which opened on March 8, 1921, and the decree establishing the policy was issued on April 7, 1921.

² The "industrial and financial chaos" was due to the World War, foreign armed intervention, the blockade, and the famine of 1921.

cent, the co-operatives for 3·6 per cent, the small handicrafts for 29·4 per cent, and the private traders for only 3·5 per cent of the total production. As regards internal trade, the figures for the same year were more favourable to the private operator. 43·5 per cent fell to the share of the State institutions, 20·6 per cent to the co-operatives, and 35·9 per cent to the private traders.

As already mentioned, the railways had been severely damaged and disorganized in the course of the world and civil wars. Many observers averred that decades would elapse before the railways could be restored to their pre-war condition. They did not reckon with the enthusiasm of the Soviet engineers and railwaymen.

During the period of so-called military Communism railway services were gratis to all citizens, but under the N.E.P. the lines were placed on a self-maintaining basis from January 16, 1922, onwards. In the economic year 1922-23 they showed a deficit of 80,000,000 roubles, but in 1923-24 they produced the substantial surplus of 30,000,000 roubles. Unfortunately, the Soviet Government was compelled to spend all this surplus on restoring the Eastern Siberian railways, which only came under their effective control in 1923.

The amount of reconstruction work to be done may be somewhat gauged from the fact that of the 19,525 locomotives within the Soviet Union in 1922-23 (economic year) no less than 58·2 per cent were in need of repairs.

The energy devoted to this task by the Soviet Government and its citizens earned the warm commendation of the well-known Canadian railway constructor, Sir Donald Mann. On his return from the U.S.S.R. he declared:

"All classes in Russia from the Government down are working hard and are very anxious to make good. They want to put their house in order.

"The railways are not in a bad condition. I travelled 2,500 miles by rail, and found the lines in good shape. The road beds are excellent. The sleeping-cars were as good as you get anywhere on the Continent. The service was not very fast, but it was punctual. I went from Moscow to Petrograd, a distance of four hundred miles, in twelve hours. I also

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went to the Black Sea ports by train. The passenger speed was from twenty-seven to forty miles per hour.”¹

Some hundreds of heavy steam locomotives were imported from Sweden and Germany, tens of thousands of rails from Germany, and some thousands of tank cars, as well as a large number of boilers from Great Britain and Canada.

The following short table gives some indication of the comparative state of the railways in 1913, 1922-23, and 1923-24:

	Russian Empire, 1913	U.S.S.R., 1922-23	U.S.S.R., 1923-24
Permanent way (versts)	63,700	63,841	67,652
Locomotives	20,320	19,525	20,208
Locomotives in need of repair per cent per total	16.8	58.2	55.1
Goods wagons	500,000	403,900	435,800
Goods wagons in need of repair per cent of total	8	32.2	30.9
Passenger cars	30,300	—	29,400
Passenger cars in need of repair per cent of total	—	—	77

In addition to the importation of railway equipment, the Russian railway works had again become active and were turning out much of the country’s railway requirements.

Illiteracy, insufficient schools and teachers constituted one of the worst legacies inherited from Tsardom. The aim of the Soviet Government was the establishment of a well-balanced system of education compulsory up to at least the age of sixteen, and free from the elementary schools to the universities. In addition, they aimed at abolishing illiteracy among adults. The task was an enormous one. In 1924 it was estimated that about 40 per cent of the children were attending the elementary schools, but owing to the lack of school buildings and teachers most of the schools

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, August 27, 1923.

were working two shifts, i.e. from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., and from 3 p.m. till 9 p.m.

All kinds of institutions aided in the fight with illiteracy. In addition to the schools, with about four million pupils, dealing exclusively with illiterates, the trade unions, the Red Army, factory schools, etc., etc., were mobilized.

The work done by the Soviet Government in the field of education earned well-deserved encomiums from many foreign visitors. Miss Dorothy Jewson, M.P., who visited the country in August-September 1924, in an interview declared:

“The two great points which impressed me were the enormous strides that are being made educationally, and the extraordinary provision made for the care of the children.

“If Russia continues what she is doing now, she will in ten or twenty years, in my judgment, be the most civilized country in Europe. There is a tremendous turn towards education. Everybody is frantically eager for it.”

The work among the children Miss Jewson regarded as marvellous.

“There are big homes for the care of children who are destitute or whose parents cannot maintain them. Nothing seems to be too good for the child.”¹

Contrary to what was generally believed in Western Europe, the Bolsheviks paid particular attention to the great works of art which were in Russia at the time of the November Revolution. Those which had been in private hands were used to enrich the collections in public museums and galleries, and arrangements were made for frequent regular visits to these museums and galleries of large groups of children, students, workers, and peasants under the charge of competent guides. The country’s great works of art were for the first time available for the artistic enjoyment and education of all the people. “On all public days,” states the British T.U.C. Official Report, “large classes of children, workmen,

¹ *Daily News*, September 8, 1924.

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and students may be seen in charge of a guide or teacher receiving instruction regarding the exhibits. Many of the classes are often organized parties from the provinces."

Sir Martin Conway, M.P., visited the U.S.S.R. in 1924 to inspect its art treasures, and on his return wrote very appreciatively of what the Soviets were doing:

"The anxiety which has been felt in artistic circles as to the fate of the Hermitage at Petrograd and its contents is relieved by the report of Sir Martin Conway, M.P., who has returned to England after visiting Russia, on his own initiative, to inquire into the present condition of Russian art treasures.

"Sir Martin Conway states that he found both the Hermitage and the Kremlin at Moscow in a remarkably good state of preservation. In Petrograd the Winter Palace has been added to the Hermitage to form part of a vast museum. The director is the same as before the war, and he has in hand a scheme for the complete rearrangement of the national museums which is expected to take thirty-five years to complete. But all the time, according to Sir Martin Conway, the arrangements both at Moscow and at Petrograd are being steadily improved. He saw few signs of vandalism. It is said that only one article, and that of minor importance, disappeared from the Hermitage."¹

There was an insatiable demand for more museums throughout the country. *The Times* report continued:

"Whereas there were fifty museums in Russia before the war, there are now at least two hundred and fifty, and with the smallest encouragement more museums would be established. Everywhere, he declares, there is the keenest interest in the museums which have been founded. In fact, the Government is said to be seriously troubled by the passion for establishing museums. They are open to the public on certain days and certain hours every week, and every village seems to desire its own museum. Many of the principal houses, as well as the palaces and museums, have been kept as museums, and in Moscow there are two private collections of French pictures, which include some of the best in the world."

Later, Sir Martin Conway contributed a series of articles to the *Daily Telegraph*, in the course of which he stated:

¹ *The Times*, June 24, 1924.

"Hardly any of the works of French goldsmiths of the eighteenth century escaped the melting-pot. Ruin overtook the great abbeys, and many of the noblest examples of medieval architecture were levelled to the ground. In Russia nothing of the kind has happened. The monasteries, indeed, have been suppressed and their property confiscated, but so far from being injured, their paintings, their jewels, their vestments and embroideries have been carefully gathered together and many of them saved from the progressive decay to which they were subjected. How this fortunate result was arrived at I cannot say. Clearly the psychology of the Russian crowd must have been very different from that of the French."¹

As to the Crown jewels, Mr. Conway averred:

"The report, widely spread, and very generally believed, stated that all these Crown jewels had been sold, and many of them broken up into their constituent parts. Broadly speaking, I saw quite enough to warrant me in assuring the interested public that the important Crown jewels of Russia remain in the keeping of the present Government."²

Mr. Conway, in concluding his article, said, "Of this I am assured, there is more interest taken in artistic treasures and monuments to-day in Russia than in any other country I have visited."³

The Soviet Press played an important rôle in the spread of knowledge. In 1914 the circulation of the daily press amounted to 2,728,700 copies, but in 1924 it was only 2,530,000. However, in the latter year the daily papers were much more widely read because the workers' clubs throughout the country subscribed to them, and the authorities estimated that each copy was read by at least ten persons. In addition to the daily press there were trade union, peasant, and native vernacular journals.

The Soviet authorities recognized the importance of developing the art of self-expression among workers, and they encouraged the development of the "wall-newspaper"—written by workers and pasted up in the factories for all to read—in which the writers expressed themselves freely concerning the work of the plant, made suggestions for improvements, and gave their views on a

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, November 17, 1924.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, December 23, 1924.

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wide range of other subjects. Thousands of valuable ideas which would otherwise have been lost were garnered from these "wall-newspapers" and applied for the benefit of all.

Legislation, probably the most advanced in the world, was enacted affecting women and children. Brothels, which were legal and blessed by the Russian Church under Tsardom, were declared illegal. The stigma of illegitimacy was abolished, and children born out of wedlock and unmarried mothers had the same rights under the law as children born in marriage and married mothers. Women were accorded the same rights as men with equal pay for equal work; the highest positions in the land were open to women on the same terms as to men. Employed women were granted eight weeks' absence from work with full pay before and after childbirth, and 950 crèches, even as early as 1924, were organized in the villages, in which peasant women could leave their children whilst they were at work. The status of women had truly been revolutionized.

The palaces of the Romanovs and the mansions of the wealthy landowners, bankers, industrialists, and merchants, on the shores of the tideless Black Sea, on picturesque banks of rivers, in beautiful mountainous areas throughout the vast country, were turned into holiday homes, rest-homes, children's homes, sanatoria, etc., under the control of the Soviets and the Trade Unions.

How were the masses reacting, and what effect was all this advanced legislation producing in the mood of the people? Here we can only quote two witnesses who visited the U.S.S.R. in the summer of 1924: Mr. Lancelot Lawton, of the *Daily Chronicle*, and Dr. Storr-Best, of the *Daily News*. After a visit to an opera, Mr. Lawton wrote:

"Let me hasten to add that in Russia to be called a proletarian is to be specially honoured; the proletarians are the chosen ones of the earth.

"They occupied all the best seats in the house; the spacious Imperial box from which the Tsar and his family used to view the performance was filled to overflowing with them (how strange to see sitting there young Communist girls wearing red handkerchiefs on their heads and eating sunflower seeds), while several of the boxes at either side of the

stage were reserved for Commissars and their relatives—the new aristocracy.

“My companion, a typical bourgeois of the old days, heaved a sigh, and remarked, in a whisper, ‘How the times have changed!’”

Gone was the hopeless mental stupor of pre-revolutionary days. Mr. Lawton continued:

“In some streets one frequently meets processions of sombre-looking working people, marching behind red banners, on which are inscribed in gold letters revolutionary mottoes, or of well-clad soldiers of good physique—one cannot help contrasting the alert expressions on their faces with the sheepish look that was stamped upon the countenance of the men who had to serve the Tsar.”¹

Dr. Storr-Best’s observations in substance endorsed those of Mr. Lawton. Moral improvements were striking. Dr. Storr-Best relates:

“Obscene and profane language, once so common, is now almost extinct; drunkenness is extremely rare and severely punished; and, although the streets at night are practically unlit, and the population of Moscow has nearly doubled since pre-war times, crimes of violence are almost unknown.”²

The young people took their duties seriously. Dr. Storr-Best continues:

“Many men have buttons on their coats to indicate the profession to which each belongs. The women are without hats, the men wear caps—peaked or Phrygian—never hats. All these look plump and well, and there is a large number of really beautiful girls; but the morning faces of the young people do not shine as they should with the joy of living, they are too serious and purposeful.”³

The people of Moscow were healthy and hopeful. Dr. Storr-Best concludes: “The people are thoroughly healthy—more so than in most large English towns; they are adequately fed; they are not over-worked, but work hard; they have cheap and simple

¹ *Daily Chronicle*, September 10, 1924.

² *Ibid.*, September 9, 1924.

³ *Daily News*, September 12, 1924.

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pleasures and enjoy them soberly; they have many evils to bear and bear them with astonishing courage and hope in the future.”¹

The trade unions, which were illegal under Tsardom, were given a place in the State more important than that in any other country in the world. At the end of 1924 the trade unions had a membership of over six million organized in twenty-three national industrial societies on the principle of “one factory, one union.” All the workers in, say, a textile factory, operatives, engineers, stokers, office workers, etc., were all in the one union. The organizations were in a very different position from that in capitalist countries, because the workers, the men and women who comprised the membership were the ruling class. In passing, it may be observed that in 1924 the Central Organization was divided into eight departments, with 215 officials, only fifty of whom were members of the Communist Party.

“Representatives of the Unions,” states the report of the British T.U.C. Delegation (1924), “sit, not only on all the Councils that control industry, but on all the Councils of the Soviet Government. For example, on the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, which is one of the chief organs of the Government, there are five trade union representatives out of thirteen members.” The report continues: “There is one such representative on the Council of People’s Commissars, and on the Lesser Council of People’s Commissars, which deals with the drafting of legislation, there is another. There is also one on the very important Council of Labour and Defence, and another on the principal Committee of the Foreign Trade Commissariat. On the State Planning Commission (Gosplan) there are three and others in the Special Sections. There is also a trade union representative on the Presidium of the Supreme Economic Council, the Industrial Planning Commission, the Building Planning Commission, the Electrification Commission, the Fuel Commission, the Concessions Committee, etc.”

What was the aim? The report explains: “The object of this is

¹ *Daily News*, September 15, 1924.

not only to train the worker in technicalities, but also to check any use of the enterprise against the new ruling class." We deal with this subject more fully in another chapter.

By the end of 1924 the position of the workers and peasants throughout the vast areas of the U.S.S.R. had been revolutionized as compared with Tsarist days. It is true that very much of the work which had been done was restoration work, such as might have been done in any country which had been subjected to "the fire and sword of a ruthless invader," but the discerning observer saw much more than just repair work; he saw the steady spread of an all-pervading planning, which, as we shall see in a subsequent chapter, a short four years later enabled the Soviet Government to launch a plan of social construction far bolder than any that had ever been adumbrated by any nation in human history.

Also by the end of 1924 the U.S.S.R.'s international position was very different from what it was in the spring of 1921. The first Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement (temporary) had been signed in London on March 16, 1921, under which commerce was opened between the two countries (the banks still maintained their boycott of British-Soviet trade), and Great Britain thus recognized Soviet Russia *de facto*. Great Britain was the first Great Power to grant even this "half-recognition" to the Soviet Union.

However, the Soviet Union's consolidation and steadily growing strength, coupled with the diplomatic and trade difficulties of the other Powers, made the weight of the U.S.S.R. felt in the international arena, and one great Power after the other restored trading relations and accorded full *de jure* recognition to the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (the U.S.S.R.¹).

¹ The declaration of the formation of the U.S.S.R. was made December 30, 1922, at Moscow. The Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (R.S.F.S.R.); the Ukraine Socialist Soviet Republic (U.S.S.R.); the White Russian Socialist Soviet Republic; and the Transcaucasian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic: the Socialist Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan; the Socialist Soviet Republic of Georgia; and the Socialist Soviet Republic of Armenia, joined in one united State—"The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics." The actual Constitution of the U.S.S.R. was adopted at a meeting of the Central Executive Committee, July 6, 1923.

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Germany recognized the Soviet Government *de jure* on April 16, 1922, and the U.S.S.R. was recognized *de jure* by Great Britain on February 1, 1924, by Italy on February 7, 1924, by Norway on February 13, 1924, by Austria on February 20, 1924, by Greece on March 8, 1924, by Dantzig on March 13, 1924, by Sweden on March 15, 1924, by China on May 31, 1924, by Denmark on June 18, 1924, by Mexico in August 1924, by Hungary on September 18, 1924, and by France on October 28, 1924.

Inside the country the Government's position was stronger than ever. Many competent observers who had travelled far in the U.S.S.R. averred that even many internal political opponents of the Soviets admitted that there was no conceivable alternative to the existing regime.

When "the bells rang out the old year" in 1924, the internal and international position of the Government of the U.S.S.R. was more firmly established than ever. As many commentators stated: "The U.S.S.R. is now a great World Power."

CHAPTER VI

CONTINUED PROGRESS 1925 AND 1926

THE progress of the U.S.S.R. in the years 1925 and 1926 continued to justify the confidence of its supporters at home and its friends abroad. In the calendar year 1926, the area under grain, which had risen steadily year by year, was only 23,000,000 acres less than in 1913. The value of agricultural production in the economic year 1925-26 amounted to £1,303,900,000 (in pre-war prices) as compared with £1,315,375,000 in 1913, i.e. 99.1 per cent of the pre-war level.

In addition to grain production the cultivation of industrial plants, cotton, flax and hemp, so vital to Soviet industry, had recovered even more rapidly. As regards cotton—the total area under cultivation in the U.S.S.R. was:

1909-13	..	..	..	..	1,556,000	acres.
1923	..	..	..	..	524,875	"
1925	..	..	..	..	1,654,000	"
1926	..	..	..	..	1,701,000	"

The recovery in the case of flax was not quite so satisfactory—the area under cultivation in 1912 was 3,687,840 acres; in 1916 it fell to 3,446,040 acres; in 1923 to 2,271,620 acres; in 1924 there was an increase to 2,804,620 acres; in 1925 to 3,489,720 acres; and in 1926 to 3,524,617 acres.

Respecting hemp, it suffered comparatively less than other industrial plants during the world and civil wars:

Area under hemp cultivation.

1900-04	1,950,000	acres.
1911-15	1,374,880	"
1916	1,437,800	"
1925	1,943,240	"
1926	1,809,156	"

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It was eloquent of the improving methods of cultivation that although the area sown in 1926 was somewhat less than in 1925, the output of hemp fibre was 9,000 tons more.

As mentioned earlier, tractors were practically unknown in Tsarist Russia, but by the end of 1926 the no mean number of 11,000 tractors were at work on Soviet fields, and the Government had taken preliminary steps to erect a tractor factory at Stalingrad with an annual output capacity of 10,000 tractors and to build a number of other factories for the construction of tractors, other agricultural machinery and implements at Rostov-on-Don, and in various parts of the Soviet Union.

As already mentioned there had been a large-scale destruction of domestic animals during the years of the Civil War. From 1922 onwards there was a steady recovery, as the following table shows:

Animals.	1922-23.	1923-24.	1924-25.	1925-26.
Horses . . .	20,906,000	22,344,000	24,082,000	25,768,000
Cattle . . .	40,447,000	46,692,000	50,240,000	51,988,000
Sheep and Goats . . .	57,667,000	69,304,000	79,320,000	81,938,000
Pigs . . .	9,118,000	16,829,000	16,437,000	15,599,000

The peasants were asserting themselves not alone by restoring agricultural production. A *Daily Express* correspondent on his return from the U.S.S.R. wrote: "As matters stand to-day, the whole economic structure of Soviet Russia rests on the shoulders of the peasant. He has begun to realize this, and though not fundamentally hostile to the Bolsheviks—who, after all, have given him the land coveted for centuries—he is now demanding a fair return in manufactured goods for the agricultural products which are Russia's lifeblood."¹

And despite a shortage of manufactured goods the peasant was living better. Mr. Arthur Ransome wrote:

"The peasantry have profited by the Revolution in that they have the

¹ *Daily Express*, January 19, 1926.

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use of the land and pay no rent for it. Their taxes are low (many think too low, as they are obviously without much inducement to sell their corn, and can afford to hold it up with a view to getting better prices). They are doing a great deal of building, always a sign of material prosperity, though in many cases it is as well not to ask where they get the timber. The foresters are unable to prevent an enormous amount of unauthorized felling in the State woods. There is little difference between the new cottage and the old. The peasant still spreads himself in simple traditional decoration done almost exclusively with the axe, as on the borders of windows and roofs. He feeds very much better than in the old days, having learnt to do so during the time when he had small means of getting anything by selling his produce. He has taken to eating white bread. Formerly white flour was for the rich or for export, not for the peasant. He also eats much more meat, a habit he learnt during the wars.”¹

The progress in industrial production was equally satisfactory, indeed bearing all the difficulties in mind, more so. The value of the industrial output in 1925-26 had risen to about £735,568,750 (in pre-war prices) which was only about £63,962,500 less than in 1913, i.e. 92 per cent of the pre-war.

Work had been begun on the erection of new enterprises, including textile, machine construction, metal work, and so on.

Undoubtedly the economic recovery of the country was aided by the importation of machinery, equipment, tools, spare parts, raw materials, etc. By 1926 the foreign trade of the U.S.S.R. had reached considerable figures. In the economic year 1925-26 Soviet exports amounted to 667,800,000 roubles and imports to 755,600,000 roubles: a total trade turnover of 1,423,400,000 roubles. In passing it may be noted that in this field also the Soviets had confounded their foreign critics, who prophesied when the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement was signed in 1921 that the commercial world had nothing to expect from trade with the U.S.S.R. To quote just three:

“Sir Robert Horne himself has been frank upon this point. He had admitted that Russia has nothing to sell, and will not have anything to sell for years.” (*The Times* leading article, March 17, 1921.)

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, March 31, 1926.

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“Nobody believes . . . that anything in the nature of active trade with Russia can come of it [the Trade Agreement]. The impossibility of that has been demonstrated a hundred times.” (*Daily Telegraph* leading article, March 17, 1921.)

“Taking into account the recent history and present conditions of Russia it is confidently and unanimously predicted that no appreciable trade between the two countries will result.” (*Morning Post*, March 18, 1921.)

Despite these “hard-headed” and “well-informed” Jeremiahs, Soviet sales on the British market (1920–26) amounted to £95,166,000 and purchases to £104,961,000, making a total trade turnover of £200,127,000.

One of the aims of the Soviet Government was to bring “light,” electric light instead of candles and oil lamps, into the houses of the workers and peasants. In 1924–25 the output of the electrical industry had equalled, and in 1926 exceeded by about 50 per cent the pre-war level. Old electric stations were reconditioned and extended and work was begun on new ones in all parts of the country. Electric power was carried to even remote mountain villages. Among other things, this was all part of a huge plan to make life in the drab villages more tolerable.

An earnest of the big electric power schemes of the Soviets was the opening of the Volkhov power station. A Reuter’s cable, dated “Leningrad, December 20, 1926,” stated: “In the presence of the President of the Council of People’s Commissars and other members of the Government, as well as representatives of the Consular Corps in Leningrad, the new electric power station at Volkhov was formally opened yesterday. The station, it is claimed . . . is the most powerful in the Soviet Union. The Volkhov power station will supply electrical energy to the industries in Leningrad. It cost 90,000,000 roubles (approximately £9,000,000) to build.”¹

Basic capital (including agriculture, industry, electrical construction, transport, communications, elevators, and refrigerators, health insurance, educational property, municipal economy, and urban house building) steadily grew:

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, January 21, 1926.

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						<i>Roubles (at Prices of October 1, 1924).</i>
1923-24	49,913,800,000
1924-25	50,682,700,000
1925-26	..	..	..	..	..	52,433,400,000

The budget, which, as explained in the last chapter, was first balanced in the economic year 1924-25, not only remained balanced, but the revenue steadily increased:

						<i>Roubles.</i>
1922-23	..	..	..	..	..	1,332,818,000
1923-24	..	..	..	..	..	1,917,455,000
1924-25	..	..	..	..	..	2,572,911,000
1925-26	..	..	..	..	..	3,986,000,000

The achievements of the Soviet Government in this field were all the more remarkable when it is recalled that the Tsarist budget only balanced on four separate years during the nineteen years immediately preceding the World War, and that the U.S.S.R. was the one Continental belligerent which had stabilized its currency and balanced its budget without the aid of a foreign loan.

Two items in the 1925-26 budget are deserving of special attention: no less than 30 per cent of the expenditure was devoted to "cultural requirements," and only 16 per cent to means of defence. The Commissar for Finance, in introducing his budget, declared that the Tsarist Government, in 1913, had spent four and a half times as much on its fighting forces as the Soviets proposed to spend in 1925-26. Despite this much smaller expenditure, many foreign visitors to the U.S.S.R. about this time paid high tributes to the improvements in and the efficiency and smartness of the defence forces of the U.S.S.R. Thus Colonel T. C. R. Moore, M.P., records his impressions of the military parade on the Red Square in Moscow, May 1, 1926:

"In front, and as far as the eye can reach, stand the serried ranks of the Red Army—horse, foot, guns, tanks, and armoured cars—while above, circling round in perfect formation, wheel squadrons of aeroplanes....

"Then comes the march past, and in perfect time, in perfect formation,

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and with the strictest military precision, the flower of the Red Army swings by. As each unit reaches the saluting base a perfectly timed cheer greets their commander-in-chief, mingled with the stirring refrain of the regimental march from the bands.

“And so the march past goes on till finally through the dust heave and clank the monstrous tanks, while ominous armoured cars bring up the rear, and at length the vast square is emptied and silent save for the last strains of the ‘Internationale’ dying away in the distance. The parade is over, and we, too, go home.”¹

Colonel Moore was puzzled to account for the vast improvements in the Red Army. He continued:

“As those grey green masses filed past with perfect discipline, I could not help thinking what kind of discipline has produced this outwardly perfect machine. It is not—it cannot be—the discipline of tradition or *esprit de corps*, since the Red Army has now no traditions beyond those of fratricidal strife and bloodshed. Is it the discipline of fear or of love—fear of the iron hand of their masters, or love of their country?

“I must eliminate the former, since the masters of to-day are the comrades of yesterday, and so I come to the conclusion that has already been forming in my mind that love of country is at the bottom of the success which has of late attended the efforts of the Government in building up a new Russia.”

Colonel Moore had grasped part but not the whole of the truth. “Love of country,” yes, but why? Because the Russian masses realized that the country was “theirs,” that the land and the means of production, etc., belong to *them* and not to landlords and capitalists.

A “special correspondent” of the *Morning Post* (a paper which had never professed a high opinion of the practical ability of the Bolshevik leaders) wrote:

“Soviet Russia already ranks as a first-class air Power. There are in service to-day between 1,200 and 1,500 Russian fighting, reconnaissance, and bombing machines, and the Soviet can put into the field an air force about twice as strong as the combined forces of its neighbours, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, and Roumania, which between them possess about eight hundred military aeroplanes.”²

¹ *Daily Express*, June 9, 1926.

² *Morning Post*, August 25, 1926.

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How was this to be explained? The correspondent continued:

"The recent development of Soviet aeronautics was considerably assisted by intensive propaganda, backed by an abundant distribution of literature, and this propaganda was, at least in part, financed by the Soviet Union. In the Ukraine alone there are 4,662 local associations with over 360,000 members, each paying a membership fee of 18 roubles.

"The popular movements initiated by the local Soviets in favour of aviation were accompanied by special Press propaganda for subscriptions for an air fleet, and by the organization in large towns of associations, known as Societies of the Friends of Aviation, with branches in even the most distant country centres."¹

"Education" and "technical training" would, we think, be more apposite words than "propaganda."

Mr. C. J. Ketchum, a *Daily Express* special correspondent, was present at the November 7, 1926, celebrations in Moscow. He cabled:

"The troops, in a drizzle of rain, swept past the saluting base in front of the massive oaken mausoleum of Lenin in the shadow of the walls of the Kremlin in Red Square....

"The infantry were followed first by squadrons of cavalry carrying swords and the small red pennants of the mounted corps, and then by the artillery, who made a spectacular display as they dashed over the cobbled square at full gallop.

"It must have been an inspiring sight for the hundreds of thousands of Communist workers who were admitted to the Red Square, for the army has improved in efficiency a hundredfold since I witnessed a similar event two years ago.

"Its completeness and the extent of its equipment to-day is nothing short of remarkable. Full batteries of heavy calibre howitzers and long-range guns have been added to its strength in recent months, not to mention motor-cycle machine gunners, armoured cars, and swift-moving tanks of the latest design and construction."²

It is hardly necessary to add that the Soviet Government would

¹ *Morning Post*, August 26, 1926. ² *Daily Express*, November 8, 1926.

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much rather have devoted the money spent on strengthening its armed forces to raising the standard of life of its people.¹

Prior to the revolution the hours of labour varied from 10 to 12 and even more per day. The Labour Code in operation in 1925-26 decreed that the working day generally should not exceed eight hours, and the working day of persons engaged in dangerous trades and underground work should not exceed six hours in each twenty-four. If owing to unavoidable circumstances a worker had to work hours in excess of the legal maximum, he was paid at overtime rates for such hours.

As a matter of fact the Government and the Trade Unions, despite the shortage of skilled labour and the enormous difficulties which had confronted and were still confronting industry, did their utmost to keep down overtime, with the result that the average working day, including overtime, over the whole of industry did not exceed seven and a half hours in 1926. Juveniles between the ages of 14 and 16 could not be employed more than four hours per day, and young persons between the ages of 16 and 18 not more than six hours per day. By the end of 1926 average real wages over the whole of industry were about the average pre-war level, but the social services, which in pre-war days were negligible, amounted in 1926 to a considerable addition to money wages.

One of the first tasks to which the Soviet Government had set its hand was the establishment of a national health service, and by the end of 1926 much had been done to improve the health of the nation. The competent Commissariat had established consultative centres for expectant mothers, homes for mothers and infants, consultative centres for children, homes for infants, nursing homes, dispensaries, day and night sanatoria, forest schools, tuberculosis institutes, hospitals, and it had improved generally the medical services in towns and country districts.

A nation-wide campaign had been organized to inculcate a

¹ At the Genoa Conference of 1922 the Soviet delegates proposed that the Conference should discuss general disarmament. The other members of the Conference rejected this suggestion.

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knowledge of the laws of health and of the importance of personal and social hygiene.

The number of crèches in the villages had risen to 4,052 in 1926, and by the end of that year there were also 864 crèches in industrial centres or attached to factories. Special institutes had been established to train young doctors to become specialists regarding the health of children and juveniles and to staff scientific research centres for the direction of all the experimental demonstrating institutes for the protection of the health of children and juveniles.

There can be little doubt that the worker in 1926 was much better fed than formerly. It was estimated that in pre-war days he consumed from 2,900 to 3,255 calories; by February 1926 this figure had risen to 3,455 per day and this quantity and the standard of life of the worker generally continued to rise.

The results of all this beneficial work were that cholera, that scourge of Tsarist Russia, had been enormously diminished. Other epidemic diseases, such as smallpox, malaria, typhoid, etc., had become considerably less widespread. The following figures speak volumes:

Death-rate per 1,000		Infantile Mortality in First 12 months per 100	
In U.S.S.R.	In Moscow	In U.S.S.R.	In Moscow
1911-13 .. 29	24.8	26	28.5
1926 .. 21.4	13.2	18.7	13.4

The death-rate in the province of Moscow (not including the city), i.e. in the country districts where sanitation was of course less efficient than in the capital, had fallen from 31.5 per 1,000 of the population in 1913 to 15.5 per 1,000 in 1926.

Many visitors to the U.S.S.R. in 1926 ridiculed the reports spread abroad about the conditions of the people and the food

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situation. A "London traveller" who had journeyed to the Far East via Moscow wrote that he had not seen in Moscow "the terrific poverty which anti-Bolshevik writers had described;" that "the further one got away from Moscow the more prosperous the country appears," and that "the people at wayside stations, peasants—both men and women—seem of fine physique."¹

And Mr. C. J. Ketchum cabled from Moscow: "Provision shops here are packed with eager buyers, and the sale of foodstuffs and wines is unprecedented. In short, Christmas in Russia will be observed this year, according to to-day's indications, with a greater spirit of freedom and genuine rejoicing than at any time since the advent of the Bolsheviks to power."²

Progress, steady and not slow, in 1925 and 1926 was recorded in all sections of the railways; the total operating length of the permanent way by the end of 1926 had increased (despite the fact that by the separation of the Border States, the Soviet Union had lost a considerable length of permanent way) by over 16,267 versts, as compared with 1913.

In addition, some twenty new railways, improving connections and linking up industrial regions with sources of raw materials, were in course of construction. The number of locomotives had been increased to over 20,500 and the percentage in need of repairs had been reduced to about 45 per cent. The number of goods wagons had risen to about 450,000 and the percentage in need of repair had been reduced to about 16 per cent. The number of passengers carried in 1926 was more than 50 per cent above the 1913 and nearly 100 per cent above the 1924 figure, and the revenue was about 50 per cent above 1913 and more than 100 per cent above 1924. The recovery and extension in the railway industry were amongst the most remarkable achievements of this period.

Professor Lomonosov, the well-known Russian engineering expert, in an interview with a *Manchester Guardian* correspondent, declared that: "There are under construction in Russia 450 steam locomotives. . . . In two years the capacity for furnishing the

¹ *Daily News*, October 7, 1926. ² *Daily Express*, December 23, 1926.

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full needs of the Russian railways will be reached. To keep the present Russian railway system of 46,000 miles amply supplied 300 locomotives a year would be enough, but we do not know how many new railways will be built, and apart from increasing mileage the traffic is also growing."

The Professor concluded: "Two months ago the special department for the construction of railways was reconstituted, after having been closed down since the beginning of the war. It is now proposed to build 3,000 miles of railway a year."¹

There was no abatement in the enthusiasm of the Soviet Government to extend the frontiers of education. The number of children attending the elementary and secondary schools in 1926 was (about) 10,600,000; the number of students attending the technical schools 750,000, and the number attending the adult schools (industrial and agricultural) about 2,000,000. There was a decrease in the numbers of those attending the schools for illiterates as compared with two years earlier, due to the fact that many had learned to read and write.

Teachers and others interested in education, who visited the U.S.S.R. in 1926, were greatly impressed by the efforts of the Soviet authorities in the realms of culture.

A *Manchester Guardian* correspondent wrote from Moscow: "The army and the trade unions have done yeoman service in carrying out the Government's programme for the elimination of illiteracy. Peasants are taught to read the newspapers and to write for them. The non-Russian national minorities, systematically neglected and persecuted under the Tsarist regime, are given much fairer treatment in the allotment of educational facilities."²

In passing, we may note that under Tsardom illiteracy among the national minorities was often as high as 95 per cent.

A number of English teachers who had returned from Russia met in London, November 4, 1926, to compare impressions. A correspondent who was present wrote: "They were unanimous in their admiration for the enthusiasm both of teachers and taught,

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, January 12, 1926.

² *Ibid.*, January 1, 1926.

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and in their appreciation of the experimental work that is being done over there. The three points that seem to have struck the visitors most were (1) the success of the co-education method, which was not made compulsory and universal until after the revolution; (2) the fact that all education is free from the nursery school up to and including the University; and (3) that self-government in the schools really gives responsibility to the children and is not merely a name.”¹

Miss V. Hyett (senior mistress at the King Alfred School), after having spent four months in the U.S.S.R., said: “That although there was poverty in the country there were conditions existing in Russia which gave her children a much better chance of a clean, healthy life than that possessed by the children in the East End of London.”²

As regards the continued care and attention which the Soviet Government had and was devoting to the arts, Dr. Herbert Bury, Anglican Bishop for North and Central Europe, after a visit to the U.S.S.R., in the course of an address at the Albert Hall, Manchester: “Praised the attempt of the Soviet Government—and as far as he knew a perfectly successful attempt—to bring the best of Russian civilization within the reach of the workers and their children. That had never been done in any other country as it had been done in Russia. He described his visits to the museums and art galleries of the cities, with the object, he said, of learning whether it was true that special parties were engineered to impress trade unionist visitors from other lands. He found that the greater part of the visitors to these galleries were the Russian workers and their children, and he saw how intelligently the exhibits, and especially the paintings, were explained to them by the guides.”

Dr. Bury said further that: “It was a slander to say that the Soviet Government had looted the treasures of Russia; it had added to them. He was bewildered by the magnificence of the Hermitage collection. Without glossing over the other side of the picture, he gave credit to whom credit was due. He went to the

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, November 5, 1926. ² *Ibid.*, January 1, 1927.

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Leningrad Opera House, and there saw operas as magnificently done as he had seen them in Vienna, but before a totally different audience—an audience of workers.”¹

The Bishop concluded: “Of all the slanders I single out the one that suggests that the workers do not appreciate the best.”

By the end of 1926 the Government of the U.S.S.R. was able to register a marked improvement in its position both at home and abroad, as compared with 1924, with one exception: in the interim Anglo-Soviet relations had worsened considerably. The attacks made by Tory Ministers in 1926 on the U.S.S.R. arising out of a number of disputed questions led many to the conclusion that certain members of the British Government were only waiting for an incident (which they would be able to exaggerate out of all proportion) to serve as a pretext for the severance of diplomatic relations between London and Moscow. Such an incident arose, perhaps it would be more correct to say, was created, when in violation of the agreement of June 1923, without any justifiable reason, the premises of the Soviet Trade Delegation in London were raided by the police on May 12, 1927. This led to the rupture of diplomatic relations with Moscow on May 26, 1927. Relations were, however, renewed in the autumn of 1929.

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, December 1, 1926.

CHAPTER VII

FROM JANUARY 1927 TO THE FIRST FIVE-YEAR PLAN

FROM January 1, 1927, until the First Five-Year Plan was launched on October 1, 1928, the U.S.S.R. continued to make steady progress in all branches of her national economy, but between these dates progress was not evenly distributed over the various spheres of production.

In all the most important branches of industry—coal, oil, pig-iron, rolled metal, cement, cotton, woollen and linen fabrics—the economic years 1926–27 and 1927–28 registered marked progress as compared with all post-revolutionary years.

In 1927–28 the value of the total industrial output (State, co-operative, and private) was 26·6 per cent above the pre-war level of output.

The socialized sector (in 1927–28) of industry had increased at the expense of private industry:

Year.	All Industries.	State.	Co-operative.	Small Handicraft.	Private.
1925–26	100	71·5	4·6	21·2	2·7
1927–28	100	78·2	9·5	10·1	2·2

Owing to better organization and improved methods, despite a shorter working day, the value of output per worker per annum had risen from 2,450 roubles at pre-war prices in 1913 to 3,096 roubles in 1927–28.

The volume of industrial production in 1927–28 exceeded that of 1913 by the considerable figure of 26 per cent. This was a remarkable achievement, and the fact that the U.S.S.R. was recovering industrially naturally attracted attention abroad. However, the critics of the Soviets said, "yes, they can reconstruct the

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old factories, but they are incapable of new construction." These gentlemen, as we shall see in later chapters, were in for an unpleasant awakening.

As mentioned in previous chapters, the Soviet authorities were paying particular attention to the development of electricity—thanks to the construction of new large electric power stations and the increased power of existing regional stations, the output capacity of the electric stations, which amounted to 1,440,000 kilowatts in December 1926, had risen to 1,690,000 in December 1927, and to 2,130,000 kilowatts in September 1928, and the output of electric energy, which amounted to 3,220 million kilowatt hours in 1925–26, had risen to 4,112 million in 1926–27, and to 5,000 million kilowatt hours in 1927–28.

Soviet engineers had shown their mettle by the successful utilization of peat as fuel in electric power stations. The Shatura electric station, near Moscow, was recognized as the best equipped and largest peat fuel station in the world.

It is true that about 78 per cent of the energy generated in the country was used by industrial concerns, tramways, etc., and only 28 per cent for lighting, but the extent to which electricity was being used in the villages may be somewhat gauged from the fact that in 1928 there were over 100 village stations and sub-stations.

One of the big hydro-electric stations in the course of construction in 1928, which attracted considerable attention abroad, was the Dnieperstroi. After visiting it, M. Shimoda, the Japanese Consul-General in Odessa, gave his impressions thus: "In my opinion the Dnieperstroi is one of the finest constructions in the world. The participation of a number of first-class experts in the work ensures the undoubted success of this enterprise. Our Government is very much interested in the Dnieperstroi, for Japan is a mountainous country with much potential water power that could be utilized for the generation of electricity. I shall certainly be able to give my Government excellent reports regarding the Dnieperstroi."

The transport industry recorded steady recovery and progress.

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The permanent way was being extended at the rate of about 2,000 kilometres per annum, and in 1927-28 reached 76,837 kilometres, as compared with 58,549 in 1913. In the locomotive works, 476 new locomotives were constructed in 1926-27 and 616 in 1927-28, in addition to which (apart from minor repairs) 3,560 locomotives had had capital repairs in 1926-27, and 4,100 in 1927-28, and the percentage of locomotives in need of repairs dropped to 34.5 per cent in 1927-28, a high percentage, but very much lower than at the end of the Civil War.

Visitors to Russia continued to comment on the overcrowding of the trains and that Soviet citizens had often to wait several days to get accommodation on the trains. This was partly due to the fact that the railways were now having to handle a much greater volume of traffic than in pre-war days: the total weight of the goods traffic carried in 1913 was 132,404,000 tons; in 1927-28 it had risen to 150,611,000 tons; the number of passengers carried in 1913 was 184,800,000; in 1927-28 it had risen to 280,882,000, and in the latter year the railways showed a net profit of 355,000,000 roubles, by far the highest since the lines were placed on a self-supporting basis.

Although the coal deposits of the Tsarist Empire were reputed to be enormous, they were very little worked. In 1913 the total output was only 29,100,000 tons. This had risen in 1926-27 to 31,930,000, and in the following year to 36,300,000, an increase of 7,523,000 tons, which, however, was still much below the new needs of the country.

Critics and opponents of the new Russia had gleefully prophesied and banked on the expectation that the Soviets would be unable to restore the oil industry (the wells had become flooded, and the plant had been deliberately destroyed by fire by the "Whites" and their Allied backers) without the aid of foreign capital. Thus the late Mr. Leslie Urquhart declared in the *Financial News*, May 10, 1922:

"The Russian oilfields are not in a position to export any oil abroad. To restore production even to the low level of 1917, five years of leeway in the drilling of new wells will have to be made up.

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"This will require an outlay which cannot, I think, be put at less than £20,000,000 in the aggregate, apart from the heavy expenditure required to reinstate the properties in their former working conditions.

"Even if the 1917 level of production is reached, the improvement in Russian transport and industry will absorb the entire yield. For many years to come Russia will be an importer and not an exporter of oil."

The *Oil News*, a London weekly technical oil journal, in its May 13, 1922, issue, referring to Mr. Urquhart's assertions, commented: "These are the views which *Oil News* has been impressing upon the public."

Mr. Urquhart and his spiritual partners never conceived the miracles which the united and determined efforts of the Soviet technicians and workers could achieve. It is true that the output of oil in the Soviet Union in 1920 was only 3,893,000 tons, as compared with 9,234,000 in 1913, but in 1927-28 it had risen to 11,399,000, an increase of nearly two million tons, or 20.8 per cent above the pre-war level.

Unfortunately, the production of iron-ore and the metallurgical industries (with one exception) still lagged behind the pre-war levels, despite the most strenuous efforts of the Government, the technicians, and workers. The total output of iron-ore in 1913 was nearly 10,000,000 tons per annum. In 1927-28 it was 6,030,000 tons. The total output of pig-iron in 1913 was 4,134,000 tons. In 1927-28 it was 3,280,000 tons. The total output of steel in 1913 was 4,246,800 tons. In 1927-28 it was 4,153,500 tons. The total output of rolled-iron in 1913 was 3,226,800. In 1927-28 it was 3,353,200 tons. In these branches of industry rolled-iron was the only one in which the output exceeded the 1913 figures. All the others had made steady progress, but the results had not yet attained the 1913 levels. It is hardly necessary to add that this lag was retarding the general advance of the country.

The Agricultural Machinery Trust was one of the most successful of the country's industrial enterprises. In 1925-26 the output of agricultural machinery exceeded slightly that of 1913, and in 1927-28 the output was nearly double the pre-war volume.

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All the progress recorded was financially healthy. The U.S.S.R. was not increasing its output by using up its capital, as was alleged by its critics abroad. On the contrary, capital accumulation was taking place in every branch of the national economy. The total basic capital of the country on October 1, 1925, was 51,000 million roubles. By October 1, 1928, it had risen to 57,469 million roubles, an increase in these years of over 8,000 million roubles.

The trend away from capitalism in production had been well maintained as a comparison with the figures of two years earlier demonstrate.

Naturally, with the growth of the national economy, the number of workers employed therein had also risen. They increased from 9,808,000 in 1925-26 to 11,600,000 in 1927-28; this in turn reflected itself in trade union membership, which rose from 7,300,000 on January 1, 1926, to 10,390,000 on January 1, 1928.

As already explained in the last chapter, the Soviet Government had decreed a maximum eight-hours day. In January 1928 a beginning was made with the introduction of a maximum seven hours day. It was first introduced in a number of enterprises in the textile industries, and when reports were issued in May regarding its application during the first four months, the authorities found that, despite a number of mistakes due to lack of preparation, the experiment had borne good results. Output had increased in these enterprises and 13,000 unemployed¹ workers had obtained employment.

Now to turn to agriculture: The area under grain in 1926 was 230,156,000 acres, but the area originally cultivated in 1928 was 236,604,200. In the latter year, however, the crops failed in an area of 15 million acres in the Ukraine, which reduced the actual area under grain cultivation by nearly 9 million acres below the 1926 figures. Notwithstanding this reduction the grain harvest in 1928

¹ At this period unemployment had not been abolished in the U.S.S.R. In 1926-27 there were 1,353,000 unemployed; on April 1, 1928, this number was 1,576,000. This problem had been created in the main by the flow of peasants to the towns.

FROM JANUARY 1927 TO THE FIRST FIVE-YEAR PLAN amounted to 76.1 million tons as compared with 74.7 million tons in 1926.

In the course of 1928 the U.S.S.R. did what Tsarist Russia also did occasionally, e.g. imported some grain. This fact was hailed by foreign critics as an additional proof of "Bolshevik failure and incompetence." Yet, paradoxically, it was due to Soviet success, to the fact that they had raised the standard of living, to the fact that the peasants and urban workers were eating more than in pre-revolutionary days. The harvest of 1927 was approximately that of pre-war (despite the fact that the big estates had been split up among the peasants and consequently were farmed less scientifically), but the amount of grain marketed within the country was only about half of the pre-war quantity, and the amount exported only one-twentieth. The actual grain reserves in the hands of the State on April 1, 1928 (i.e. at the time when it was making purchases abroad) were considerably greater than in any previous post-revolutionary year.

Some progress, but not considerable, had been made in collective farming in the two years under review:

	1926-27.	1927-28.
Number of farms	15,671	33,300
Number of peasant households engaged (in 1,000)	244	417.7
Area cultivated (in 1,000 acres) ..	2,129.0	3,420.0

The crying need of the U.S.S.R. now was universal large-scale farming, a fact which was clearly understood by the Government. M. Stalin, in an interview published in the Soviet Press, June 2, 1928, stated: "The output of industry is increasing, the number of workers is increasing; the towns are growing, the districts in which industrial plants (such as cotton, flax, beet, etc.) are cultivated are also extending. All these make increasing demands for

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grain—for marketable grain—but the yield of our marketable grain is only growing frightfully slowly.”

The main reason for this was the transition after the Soviet revolution from the large-scale farming by the landed estate owners and kulaks (which, of course, gave most of the marketable grain) to the small-scale farming giving comparatively little grain for the market.

As to the remedy, M. Stalin said: “The only solution of the difficulty is to transform the small individual backward farms into collective farms properly equipped with modern machinery and working on scientific principles.”

As regards industrial plants, the following table shows the progress and retrogression which took place in the two years under consideration as compared with the pre-war yield:

Crop.	Thousand tons.		
	1913.	1927.	1928.
Flax	413	330	233
Hemp	345	511	495
Sunflower seeds ..	678	1,830	2,581
Flax seeds	539	683	412
Hemp seeds	413	576	587
Tobacco, yellow ..	28	41	30
Makhorka	76	126	121
Sugar beet	10,064	6,247	9,759

Despite the fact that the yields of industrial plants taken as a whole had reached the pre-war figures, and that less was being exported than in pre-war years, they were insufficient to supply the full needs of Soviet industry.

The quantity of livestock not only steadily increased in the period with which we are dealing, but in 1928 it was well above 1916, as the table on page 99 shows.

In many other spheres, such as the cultivation of grapes and

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tea, the raising of potatoes and fruit, the production of butter, etc., steady progress was recorded, and in some cases, such as tea, the pre-war totals were surpassed. When an all-embracing agricultural balance sheet up to September 30, 1928 (the eve of the First Five-Year Plan) was completed, the authorities discovered that the

Animal.	In millions.		
	1916.	1926.	1928.
Horses	31·5	27·7	32·1
Cattle	50·1	55·5	66·7
Sheep	81·2	113·9	123·8
Goats	9·8	9·3	12·4
Pigs	13·5	15·7	22·5

sum total of agricultural output of the U.S.S.R. for the economic year 1927-28 was 104·8 per cent of the pre-war level, a no mean achievement.

The foreign trade of the U.S.S.R. was never a good guide to the prosperity of the country. In 1925-26 Soviet exports amounted to 676·6 million roubles, which rose to 773·9 million in 1927-28, whilst imports rose from 756·4 million roubles in 1925-26 to 944·7 million roubles in 1927-28, a not inconsiderable increase, but the turnover on the home goods exchanges was a much better indicator of the country's recovery. The total inter-Union turnover of goods for the whole of the U.S.S.R. increased from 23,606 million roubles in 1925-26 to 34,510 million roubles in 1927-28.

The continued recovery of the country in the two years now under consideration was reflected in the budget receipts of the Joint Union Budget (Union Budget and Budgets of Constituent Republics), which increased from 3,986·4 million roubles in 1925-26 to 6,426·9 million roubles in 1927-28. As mentioned in a previous chapter, the Commissar for Finance introduced his first balanced budget on October 1, 1924, and since that date the Soviet budgets have remained balanced.

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With respect to education—progress was steady, though not spectacular. The number of elementary schools increased from 101,193 with about 9,200,000 pupils in 1925–26 to 116,373 with about 10,000,000 pupils in 1927–28. As to the children—a writer in the *Manchester Guardian* who had “wandered among the people in Tsarist Russia” and was then “wandering in the new Russia” observing how they (the people) live at work and at play, wrote: “It is over the children that the greatest change has come. Shy, intimidated faces are no longer seen. School-children are better clothed and, on the whole, look healthier than they used to. Their independent spirit shows itself at a very early age. They are keenly interested in everything and are free from shyness and reserve in the presence of strangers.”¹

A delegation of American teachers visited the U.S.S.R. in the spring of 1928. They saw many schools and various other educational institutions. One of them, in the course of an interview, stated that his journey to the U.S.S.R. had been “the most interesting journey abroad I have made in my life. . . . We are amazed at the work of your teachers. . . . True, there is room for improvement in some respects, but the fundamentals of a people’s education have already been well laid; further success depends exclusively on time and the means at your disposal.” He went on to commend the Soviet system of self-government in the schools, as the best of all the systems of education he had investigated.

The factory workshop schools in which juvenile workers received instruction increased from 4,329 with 531,000 students in 1925–26 to 4,711 with 601,000 in 1927–28.

There were many other educational institutions, such as pre-school institutions, schools for illiterates and semi-illiterates; political schools, elementary and advanced; reading rooms; workers’ faculties and universities; scientific institutions, etc., etc., all of which were able to report steady progress. In the higher educational institutions, preference was given to students of proletarian and

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, April 11, 1928.

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peasant origin. The correspondent of the *Observer* cabled from
Moscow, September 19, 1928:

"In this season of Russian university entrance examinations much attention is being devoted to the social status of the applications for admission. Manual workers and their children enjoy all the advantages of a privileged class in this connection; every increase in the number of students from working-class homes is hailed as an improvement in the social tone of the educational institutions."¹

The application of the principle, however, presented some difficulties:

"In practice, as this year's experience showed, the effort to fill up the universities with proletarian students encounters many obstacles. In the Moscow universities and higher technical schools there were 6,000 free places and 20,000 applications. Of the applicants 5,000 were workers and their children, two or three thousand were of peasant origin, and the remainder were children of specialists, intelligentsia, employees, and other non-proletarian classes.

"With such a distribution of the applications, and with the further circumstance that the children of educated and middle-class families, as is regrettably admitted by the Soviet Press, often come to the examinations with better preparation than the children of the workers, it was obviously difficult to carry out the original plan of ensuring that 65 per cent of the students should be of pure proletarian lineage."²

Despite these difficulties the correspondent concluded:

"Notwithstanding all these drawbacks, the proletarianization of the Soviet university student body has gone very far; the percentage of manual workers among the students is much higher than is the case in any other country. A factor that has contributed very much to this process is the institution of 'rabsfacs,' or workers' high schools, which are open, with rare exceptions, only to workers and peasants, and which supply every year about a third of the students who enter the universities and higher technical schools."³

The Soviet leaders continued to devote considerable care to the preservation of the art treasures of the country. This was testified

¹ *Observer*, September 23, 1928.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

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to by visitors to the U.S.S.R. For instance, a writer in the *Daily Telegraph* stated:

"I was very glad to reach the Hermitage. It is a combination of the National Gallery and the South Kensington Museum. We passed through room after room hung with Rubens, Vandyke, Rembrandt, Titian, and Van Eyck. We saw marvellous collections of armour and silver, of tapestries and china. Everything betrayed the care of reverent and expert supervision.

"Before the war the Gallery was reckoned to be sixth in order of merit among the collections of the world. But elsewhere in Russia there were many private collections of international repute. In the Revolution their owners vanished and their treasures passed into the custody of the Soviet. The Hermitage was too small to accommodate this influx, and to-day the Gallery overflows into a wing of the Winter Palace. It is now considered to be the third, not the sixth, greatest collection in the world."²

The writer was a foreign tourist, but these magnificent collections were mainly for the delectation and education of ordinary Soviet citizens. The writer continued:

"We were taken round by an official. He was a remarkable person, knowing all the pictures by heart, and obviously loving them. He told us that he belonged to the Soviet Department of Arts, and that his main duty was to conduct parties of workmen round the galleries. They were selected from factories engaged in the manufacture of high-class goods; and the workmen's courses of instruction, which lasted for anything up to a week, were designed to foster their creative powers and to broaden inspiration and initiative. The official seemed rather to like his job."

Perseverance had its reward, the tourist concluded:

"The workmen apparently always started by being absolutely at sea, and it was very uphill work even to hold their attention. But patience paid, and he found that after a week they would become very keen and even critical; and that many, after their courses were over, brought their wives back and lectured them."²

A tribute was paid to the high moral standards of the new Russia by another visitor to Moscow, Dorothy Thompson, who in the

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, October 3, 1928.

² *Ibid.*

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Sunday Chronicle, April 22, 1928, stated: "Less often, it seemed to me, in the streets of Moscow than in most cities is a woman accosted by a man. The bedroom farce and the sex novel simply do not exist in Russia."

Due to the improving and extending health services much had been done to ameliorate the health of the entire country. Complete statistics for this period are not available, but the fact that the infantile death-rate in Moscow had been reduced from 27 per cent in 1913 to 12 per cent by the end of 1928 is an earnest of the progress which had been made.

Despite the well-known legislation of the Government of the U.S.S.R., visitors to that country still recorded with amazement that the palaces of the late Tsar had actually been transformed into sanatoria and rest and holiday homes for peasants and workers. The *Observer*, September 16, 1928, published a cable from Yalta (in the Crimea) headed: "Dockers in Place of Grand Dukes." It read:

"The social upheaval in Russia finds abundant reflection in the transformation of the spacious dwellings of the former wealthy classes into workers' vacation homes. The most striking example of this kind is the Tsar's palace at Livadia, where three hundred peasants, drawn from all parts of the Soviet Union, are now undergoing treatment for tuberculosis and other diseases. Former grand-ducal mansions in Yalta now serve as a vacation headquarters for those members of the Dockers' and Printers' Unions who succeed in obtaining a 'komandirovka,' or authorization to go there."

Holidays for toilers were practically unknown in Tsarist Russia, but the Soviets were strenuously endeavouring to make up for lost time. This cable also stated:

"Holiday-making in Russia is much more apt to be on an organized group basis than is the case in other countries. Three-quarters of the patients in the sanatoria and rest homes are sent by their trade unions or by the State Department of social insurance, only one quarter coming in the capacity of private individuals. Excursionists also come in large bodies under the auspices of the Soviet Tourist Society, which is able

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to obtain rebates on the railroads and cheaper accommodation in hotels for the parties which it organizes."

The writer who contributed to the *Daily Telegraph* witnessed a similar phenomenon when he visited the former palaces of the Tsars at Peterhof on the southern shores of the Gulf of Finland. He wrote: "We walked up a noble avenue of cypresses; the fountains were playing; there were flowers in the beds, the lawns were tidy. Nature was as normal and beautiful as at Kew Gardens or Fontainebleau. Not so man."

Why? Had "man" reverted to type? The writer went on: "The place was full of the type of cheerful, healthy-looking, well-fed people one sees in the Bois de Boulogne on Sundays—with this embarrassing difference, that in Peterhof a large proportion of the men as well as the women were in bathing suits; all were brown as berries and the men were naked to the waist. Peterhof to-day is a holiday and rest-cure centre for the proletariat, who come there for a course of bathing alternating with sun baths. Some were in the water, some walked about, others lay on the grass reading and talking. These holidays are organized by the trade unions for labouring men and women. They pay 2 per cent of their wages to the unions and are thereby yearly entitled to free housing and food for a fortnight in the homes of the ci-devants. Others drawing higher grade salaries are also taken, but at full rates."

And had these proletarians desecrated these fine luxurious residences? The writer continued: "Peterhof Palace is as beautifully kept and as entirely French as is its prototype Versailles. We went through state rooms and ballrooms and private apartments. Everything was clean and in its place, and everywhere notices: 'Visitors are requested not to touch.' We ended rather faint—for we had breakfasted at eight—in the Imperial Chapel. It is as intensely Russian as the palace is French. The walls are smothered with ikons, frescoes, and banners, all glistening with gold; and in one corner was a small mural cabinet, hung with the keys of all the great cities of Russia."

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Adults were not the only visitors to Peterhof that day. The writer stated: "We found an open-air children's school. A pretty and quietly-dressed woman read aloud; the children, boys and girls of from seven to ten years old, sat round her on the grass, they wore red shirts, short white trousers, and red caps of the French revolution type, and were surprisingly well-behaved seeing that, as we discovered, the lesson was on 'hygiene in relation to culture.' They were the children of Communist parents."

Reference has been made in previous chapters to the increasing efficiency of the Soviets' armed forces. M. Litvinov's proposals at Geneva for complete disarmament having been rejected, the Government of the U.S.S.R. had no other alternative in the meantime but to strengthen its defence forces, which it continued to do successfully. Mr. Arthur Ransome thus described the military parade on the Red Square, February 26, 1928: "There was silence. Then by some ingenious arrangement of microphones and loud-speakers a giant voice, unrecognizable, but perhaps originally Voroshilov's, sounded as if high in the air above the crowd. The short speech ended. There followed the roar of many thousand voices; the massed bands fairly let themselves go; and above all was the hollow thunder of the saluting guns, firing battery by battery."¹

As to the troops, the writer continued: "Then came the orderly march past of infantry, each company letting loose a roar as it passed the saluting point. Then the cavalry passed at a gallop yelling. Then the artillery, three guns abreast, going as hard as they could go."

Mr. Ransome recalled ten years earlier when the Red Army was first established. He went on: "But this impressive parade of the Regular Army had not lost touch with those hungry, desperate ragamuffins who drilled here ten years ago. The regular troops were followed by armed workers from the factories by companies, Red Cross working women, and one company of sturdy young women who carried rifles with the rest. The women alone did not

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, February 27, 1928.

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shout as they passed the saluting point, but were instead themselves greeted with cheers. Last of all came demonstrators from each district carrying their flags.”¹

A few months later a correspondent of the *Daily News* was present at the May Day parade in Moscow. He cabled:

“Detachments of all arms, numbering more than 30,000, had by 8 a.m. been marshalled in the vast Red Square facing Lenin’s wooden tomb, around which a rose garden and tropical palm-trees had been planted overnight. . . .

“Precisely as the Kremlin’s clock struck nine the War Minister, M. Voroshilov, an ex-metal worker, superbly mounted on a chestnut charger, sallied from the great gateway of the citadel, and, followed by his aides-de-camp, galloped to the tomb rail and exchanged salutes with the General Officer commanding the Moscow garrison. The two Army chiefs saluted the tomb, the members of the Soviet Government, and the members of the executive of the Communist International.”²

Then the review began, the correspondent went on: “First came a battalion of infantry, then squadrons of cavalry. Voroshilov reined in his horse sharply to address a few bluff words to each and receive an answering cheer, finally returning at full gallop to the tomb rail, where, dismounting, he flung his reins to an orderly and joined his fellow Commissars. It was done in the real Napoleonic manner and was in keeping with the whole display.”

Then the finale: “The climax to the whole show came when, after the infantry had marched past the tomb at the salute, Cossacks, with white gloves and scarlet saddle cloths, brandishing their lances, followed by field artillery, charged past the tomb, while a perfectly-timed phalanx of aeroplanes swooped down to the tomb and the guns roared in the fortress behind it.”

As to the condition of the troops, the correspondent concluded: “On the whole, most of the detachments looked better than they did last year. Conscripts of the line regiments were still somewhat ragged, but the professional soldiers of the O.G.P.U.—the Soviet regime’s shock troops—marched like the fanatical veterans most

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, February 27, 1928.

² *Daily News*, May 2, 1928.

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of them are, whilst the detachment of sailors from the Baltic Fleet were best of all."

We have dealt very briefly with the impressions created on the minds of foreign visitors by various aspects of life in the U.S.S.R. We trust that it will be of interest to add to these the reactions of a famous Russian writer, i.e. Maxim Gorki, who returned to his native land after an absence of six years.¹ In the course of a speech he said:

"It seems to me that I have been absent from Russia not a mere six years, but at least twenty. During the time I have been away the country has become younger. I have the impression that within and surrounded by the old, something new and fresh is growing. The houses are old, but the people are new. I see a young, young country, and I myself have grown young during the time.

"Russia has undergone a tremendous transformation. This rejuvenation of all and everything is to be seen everywhere, and also in literature. It acts on everybody and expresses itself in many things; however, it is not yet all that it will be or that is necessary.

"I know that you are real builders and you are that because you are real Communists, real Socialists—you transform things boldly and create in your own way. You are a power."

In the preceding pages we have not dealt with the differences and struggles which had taken place within the Russian Communist Party. We deal with that subject briefly in the last chapter on the recent trials; a few words may be said here, however, on the matter.

It would take us too far afield to discuss exhaustively the dispute between, on the one hand, the great mass of the membership of the Party led by Stalin, and on the other, the heterogeneous opposition of Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, etc. The essence of the dispute seemed at the time to be that Stalin and the great majority of the Party had settled down to the hard, often humdrum work of reconstructing the country, and believed that it was possible to build up socialism in the U.S.S.R. even while the rest of the world remained capitalist. Trotsky and his new-found colleagues,

¹ He had been in ill-health and had to live in Italy.

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on the other hand, seemed unable to adapt themselves to the new conditions. At the time they appeared to be revolutionary romantics unable to apply themselves to detailed constructive and administrative work. Fierce discussion of their views went on within the Party for a considerable period and time after time they were badly beaten.

Actually, as subsequent events have proved, they not only at this period carried on open opposition within the Party, but they plotted secretly against the Soviet Government. During the recent (1938) trial it was shown that many of the opposition, according to their own confessions, were endeavouring to organize rebellion against the Soviet Government, and the arrest of the then most prominent Soviet leaders—Lenin, Stalin, and Sverdlov—as far back as 1918, whilst some of the opposition have been connected with foreign Intelligence Departments since 1920, others setting up connections with such departments in later years. All this, however, has only become known during the last few years.

On the occasion of the November 7, 1927, celebrations, the “opposition” endeavoured to rally the masses on to the streets in opposition to the Government, but their efforts were a complete failure. Finally, later in the month, they were expelled from the Party.

When news of these happenings reached Western Europe it was hailed by the bourgeois Press as heralding the speedy collapse of the Soviet Government. Did this Press, we wonder, have some hint as to what was really afoot amongst the “opposition” or was it merely a case of the wish being father to the thought? In London, even such a sober journal as the late liberal *Westminster Gazette* (November 8, 1927), in a featured article headed “Coming Clash in Russia,” declared: “To-day there comes from Russia news which is believed to foreshadow the collapse—in the near future—of the whole Bolshevik regime,” and a fortnight later it carried a story subheaded “Country on the edge of revolt.”

All these anticipations were of course grotesquely inaccurate. A few months later, Mr. W. T. Goode and Mr. Arthur Ransome

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visited the U.S.S.R. to investigate the results of all these happenings. Their conclusions were a cold douche for those who had prophesied a break-up of the Soviet system. Mr. Goode came to the conclusion "that the great bulk of the population supports the Government." He continued: "Sympathy existed among intellectuals with the Opposition, but the ordinary man or woman held the opinion that it was criminal to try to disrupt the directive power at such a moment—that the Opposition had become a national danger. That impression remains after a host of conversations with people in all ranks of life."¹

Mr. Ransome was equally emphatic. He found the personnel of the leadership of the Party more working class than ever before and comparing the old intellectuals with the new men he wrote: "The old revolutionary intellectuals yearn for more revolution, more romance, more crises, more debates, more, in fact, of the circumstances in which they are at their best; and the new men of the working class who have addressed themselves to piles of documents and the daily desk and are at last beginning to feel themselves competent, desire no debates of any kind, look upon brilliance as a distracting glare, and find quite sufficient opportunity for intellectual effort in the office work to which they have learnt to bend their unaccustomed minds."²

Did this weaken the unity of the Party? On the contrary, Mr. Ransome declared: "It is unanimous as the Party has never been unanimous before." Why? Mr. Ransome explained: "The downfall of the Opposition was not, as it seemed to many people outside Russia, a sign of the dissolution of the Communist Party but of the precise opposite. It was a symptom of the Party's increasing homogeneity attained by replacing a few hundred intellectuals by a few thousand working men. Why was Trotsky disliked? Because, with increasing stability in the country, he had become increasingly out of place in its government."³

Looking back to-day there will be general agreement that Messrs.

¹ *Observer*, March 11, 1928. ² *Manchester Guardian*, March 14, 1928.

³ *Ibid.*

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Goode and Ransome were, in the main, right; although, like others at that time, they did not know the whole truth about the real nature and activities of the Opposition. The Opposition had little support among the masses; there is no doubt the storm of 1927 only blew off some dead and a few badly grafted branches, but left the firm tree of the Party and the regime uninjured. We forecast with absolute confidence that looking back a decade hence at the trials and ordeals since the summer of 1936, a similar verdict will meet with the unanimous approval of all serious students of international affairs.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST FIVE-YEAR PLAN

A SOCIALIST society which aims at organizing the national economy of the country for the benefit of the whole people and whose main object is to produce food and manufactures for use rather than for profit, to provide good, all-round education, health and other social services for the benefit of all its citizens—such a society must necessarily be based on a planned system of economy.

To make the matter clear we must here go back briefly to an earlier period with which we have dealt in other connections in preceding chapters. The first systematic attempt at planning was in 1920 when the fifteen-year plan for the electrification of Soviet Russia—the “Gelro”—was drafted. This was to form the foundation for the future economic development of the country. Later, beginning with 1925, annual control figures—particularly for industry—were drafted by the State Planning Commission (Gosplan). Subsequently in 1927, when the success of the Gelro had been found to exceed all expectations and when the Soviet organizations gained experience with the drafting of the annual estimates, they set before themselves a far more ambitious aim—to draft a Five-Year Plan for the whole national economy and cultural life of the country, having regard to its resources, the needs of the population, and the economic possibilities.

The general derision and incredulity with which the First Five-Year Plan was met by many sections of the Press in most countries and by the foreign elements hostile to the U.S.S.R., or who did not understand the socialist nature of the revolution which had taken place in Russia, is well known. All this hostility did not cause much of a headache to the Soviet authorities; they had experienced and successfully overcome too many serious onslaughts not merely by way of words, but by actual deeds, to worry much about hostile criticism abroad.

What, however, was more serious was the criticism, the hostility, and later the sabotage of some sections within the U.S.S.R. itself, not only that of their open enemies—the remnants of the former bourgeoisie, kulaks, former nobility, former officials of the Tsarist Government, etc.—but also that of people who formally supported the Bolsheviks. This hostility was manifested both before and when the plans were being drawn up and subsequently.

There was the group on the Right with A. I. Rykov at its head, who, whilst apparently conceding the need to plan a socialist economy, fought tooth and nail against the high rates of industrialization proposed in the First Five-Year Plan; they opposed any large scale scheme for the collectivization of peasant agriculture, maintaining that this would come about gradually, as it were, of itself. They proposed a Two-Year Plan of development, which would only have concerned a small section of industry, and would have left the kulak a free hand in the village.

The Left group, on the other hand, with Trotsky supporters at its head, whilst demanding a programme of super-industrialization, had no faith in the possibility of constructing a planned socialist economy in the U.S.S.R. until the rest of the world were adopting socialism. They did not think it possible for the U.S.S.R. to build up a socialist society unaided by the West, and they advocated, in brief, the subordination of everything to the agitation for the organization and promotion of world revolution. They further denied the possibility of a real union between workers and peasants, considering that the interests of these two groups were for the time being too antagonistic. They also opposed the policy of collectivization in the rural areas.

As we shall see in the last chapter, this opposition of "Lefts," "Rights," and "Centrists" did not confine itself to agitation for its point of view but engaged in wrecking, diversion, and espionage on behalf of the potential enemies of the U.S.S.R. In their mad pursuit of power the "opposition" elements went so far as to agree to the dismemberment of the U.S.S.R. and even came to terms with Fascism itself. In accordance with such agree-

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ments they organized the systematic wrecking of the Five-Year Plan as a whole and of various enterprises constructed under this Plan, and did their best to provoke discontent in various parts of the U.S.S.R.

As for the opposition of the bourgeois, kulak, and aristocratic elements, they were, of course, hostile not merely to planning, but to the whole idea of Socialism, whether in one country or the world, and from the very first not only did they try to turn the peasantry and the more backward of the workers and intelligentsia against the Soviets, but some of them actively aided the above-mentioned groups in organizing sabotage and wrecking, both in industry and agriculture.

But in spite of all their foreign and home-grown enemies, the Soviet authorities, headed by Stalin, insisted that the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R. was possible, even though the rest of the world remained capitalist, and that the success of Socialism in one country would do more for the conquest of Socialism in other countries than decades of mere word propaganda.

It was perhaps the realization of the truth of this that led the bitter enemies of Socialism at home and abroad to organize their nefarious sabotage and wrecking schemes, which became the more frenzied and monstrous—even eventually going so far as to adopt terrorist methods—as the successful victorious march of Socialism became firmer and grew in volume.

The Soviet Government, however, proceeded with their First Five-Year Plan, work on which started on October 1, 1928, and such is the advantage of a planned economy and such was the enthusiasm of the vast majority of the Soviet workers, that at the end of the first two years a spontaneous movement started in factory after factory for the completion of the Plan in four years; and this in spite of the fact that the Plan already provided for a rate of development never before attempted in any country.

Finally, the First Five-Year Plan was completed by December 31, 1932, i.e. in four and a quarter years, when 93·7 per cent. of the Plan taken as a whole had been realized. What were the

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actual results? As far as the output of goods is concerned, the main achievements were in the sphere of industry, particularly the heavy industries, which the Soviet authorities rightly regarded as of fundamental importance in the subsequent development of the whole national economy. In 1932 the volume of large-scale industrial output was 118·5 per cent above that in 1928 and 235·5 per cent above that in 1913.

Actually, the output of the means of production in 1932 exceeded the estimates for 1932-33¹ by 3·4 per cent and was 2·6 times that in 1928, and more than four times that in 1913; the output of the heavy industries alone in 1932 exceeded the plan by 9·6 per cent. On the other hand, the output of the means of consumption in 1932 was only 84·9 per cent of the Plan for 1932-33, but it was 87·3 per cent in excess of the output in 1928 and 173·5 per cent in excess of the output of such goods in 1913.

The most significant advance was perhaps in the machine construction industry, the output of which in 1932-33, in accordance with the Plan, was to have been three and a half times that in 1927-28, but actually this figure was reached in 1930-31, and in 1932 the output exceeded the Plan for 1932-33 by 54 per cent and was about seven times that of pre-war output. In addition to extending and reconstructing the machine construction works already in existence in 1928, large numbers of new plants were constructed during the First Five-Year Plan. The aim followed in the case of the machine construction works, as of other industries, was to distribute industry more evenly throughout the U.S.S.R., organizing industries as far as possible in the neighbourhood of the raw materials.

Among the most important types of machinery manufactured during the First Five-Year Plan may be mentioned all kinds of agricultural machinery, including tractors and combine harvesters,

¹ The Soviet economic year originally ran from October 1st of one year to September 30th of the following year; but in 1930 this economic year was replaced by the calendar year. In drawing up the First Five-Year Plan the economic years had of course been used.

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motor cars and lorries, Diesel engines, aeroplanes, refrigerators, oil tankers and equipment for the oil industry (cracking plants, borers, etc.), timber haulers, pneumatic machines, printing machines, lathes of all kinds, machinery for the coal, peat, metallurgical, electrical, chemical, textile industries, etc.

Much stress was laid on organizing the construction of agricultural machinery, the output of which in 1932 was over sixteen times that in pre-revolutionary Russia. The oil industry completed its Five-Year Plan by March 1931, and by 1932 about 90 per cent of the oil produced in Soviet Russia was from wells drilled after the nationalization of the industry. The rubber industry fulfilled its Five-Year Plan by October 1931; the output of the food industry in 1932 exceeded the Five-Year Plan for 1932-33 by 9 per cent, etc.

However, not all the industries fulfilled the Five-Year Plan by the end of 1932. Among these may be mentioned the coal industry, the light industries, the electrical industry, the metallurgical industry; but in every case, the progress made as compared with 1913 and 1928 was enormous.

But the First Five-Year Plan did more than simply increase output—both the original plan and supplementary additions sought to raise the cultural level of the backward national minorities inhabiting outlying parts of the country. These areas, often extremely rich in natural resources, were, as we indicated in an earlier chapter, deliberately kept by the Tsarist Government in the position of primitive backward colonies of Central Russia. There were practically no large-scale industries there, and therefore no industrial proletariat and few, if any, railways or roads. We deal with this subject again in a subsequent chapter.

One of the objects of the First Five-Year Plan was to change all this. Prospecting in the outlying areas where mineral resources were suspected was carried on energetically.

Many new industries were started, among these perhaps the most important, or at any rate the one likely to have the most far-reaching effects (in scientific development and for defence), was the aeroplane and aeroplane motor industry.

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Among the numerous new constructions may be mentioned the Kuznetsk and Magnitogorsk metallurgical plants, the Stalingrad, Kharkov, and Cheliabinsk tractor works, the Gorki motor plant, the Dniepr hydro-electrical plant, the Zlatoust machine tool plant, the Tashkent Ilytch metal-working plant, etc., etc.

In addition, numerous new plants producing consumers' goods were established, such as silk mills in Central Asia and Transcaucasia, cotton mills in Fergana, a leather factory in Frunze, as well as various sugar, meat, packing and other food plants in various parts of the country. In all, over 1,500 new large up-to-date enterprises were constructed during the First Five-Year Plan. In general, the previously existing enterprises in all industries were so extended and re-equipped that they had become to all intents and purposes new powerful modern enterprises.

The problems presented to the Soviet authorities by agriculture were equally important, but even more difficult than those of industry.

At the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan Soviet Russia was still mainly agricultural; in 1928 the urban population was 26,900,000 and the rural population (mainly at that time occupied in agriculture) was 122,700,000. About 97·3 per cent of the total cultivated area was farmed in individual peasant holdings. There were nearly 24,000,000 such holdings, their average size being 4·5 hectares, or excluding the larger kulak holdings, the average size of the middle and poor peasant holding was 4·03 hectares. In these farms large-scale mechanical farming was, of course, impossible. Agriculture, if it was to supply the requirements of the developing towns and the country generally, had to be reorganized into large-scale mechanized units. This could have been done in one of three ways: (1) by permitting the exploitation and squeezing out of the middle and smaller peasant by the richer kulaks; (2) by organizing the small individual farms into large collective units; (3) by the wholesale organization of large-scale State farms.

No socialist Government could, of course, contemplate the first course—socialist industry and towns almost wholly dependent for

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their food supply on capitalist agriculture would not have existed very long—there would have been a rattling back to capitalism in Russia within a few years. On the other hand, although a number of large-scale State farms were successfully organized, the country was certainly not ready for the wholesale adoption of this—the third course. Not only would the essentially individualistic psychology of the peasant (which could not be changed overnight) have been a formidable obstacle, but the State had neither a sufficiency of trained men, the experience or the machinery required for the organization of such farms throughout the country.

Lenin put the position regarding the attitude of the peasantry very clearly in his speech on March 23, 1919, on work in the villages. In the course of this speech, which was devoted mainly to the attitude of the Bolsheviks to the middle peasants, Lenin cautioned his comrades against attempting to force the peasants to modes of life and organization which ran counter to the then peasant psychology, and advocated patient propaganda and educational work; and, amongst other things, Lenin said: "When we took power we were supported by the peasantry as a whole. At that time all the peasants had but one task before them—to struggle against the landed estate owners. But up to the present they are prejudiced against large-scale farms. The peasant thinks—'if it is a big farm, then I shall again become a day labourer' (batrak). Of course, he is mistaken. But in the peasant mind the idea of large-scale farms is closely bound up with hatred, with his recollections how the landed estate owners oppressed the peasantry. This feeling still remains, it has not yet died out. . . .

"If we could give the village to-morrow some 100,000 first-class tractors, supply them with petrol and drivers (you know well that for the present this is but a fantasy), then the middle peasant would say 'we are for communism. . . .'

"Help the peasant first, then you will gain his confidence," Lenin explained in conclusion. How true was this prognosis is clear to all who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

There thus remained the second course—the collectivization of

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peasant farming. The individualistic habits and psychology of the peasantry here too could not but play an important part in hindering the development of the collective farms; moreover, full use of the ignorance and age-long habits of the peasantry was made by the kulak and anti-Soviet elements, the former bourgeoisie, landed estate owners and officer class in the countryside to organize opposition to the collective farms; these elements were also aided in some parts of the country by over-zealous, inefficient, and disloyal Soviet officials.

As abroad, so in the villages, all sorts of ridiculous rumours were spread, such as that the Soviet Government intended to socialize all women in the collectives, that children were to be taken away from their parents, that serfdom was being reintroduced, etc.

Nevertheless, the organization of collective farms was an easier matter than the wholesale formation of State farms. The collective farms were not all modelled on one pattern. Their form could be varied in accordance with the degree of understanding and development of the peasantry in a given district, and they varied from a loose association of a number of peasant households to till their soil in common to a more or less definitely organized collective farm (generally known as an "artel"), in which the land and the main farm livestock and agricultural implements are held in common, and finally, in a number of cases, to fully-fledged communes in which everything—apart from articles of personal use—is held, worked, and shared in common.

In the very early years of collectivization the simple association of peasant households for working their land in common was the most widespread form of collectivization. Later, the second, more complete Kolkhoz, became the most common form. In these Kolkhozy, dwellings and kitchen gardens and orchards immediately attached to them, poultry, a cow and a small number of other livestock, as well as, of course, all personal belongings, are not collectivized. The number of communes are even now comparatively few.

From the first, the authorities intended that the collectives should

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be formed on an entirely voluntary basis and that a wide educative propaganda campaign should be undertaken to persuade the peasants to combine in collective farms. At the same time the Government helped the collectives by the supply of pure seeds and machinery and implements as far as possible, loans and rebates on taxation, etc. However, in many districts rumours were spread by hostile elements that the Government intended to take away the peasants' land, and this naturally led the peasants to put their backs up. In some cases officials through stupidity, in others as a means of sabotage, attempted to force peasants to join the Kolkhozy or, in violation of the law, to collectivize their household livestock—such as poultry, a cow, etc. In this way much bad blood was aroused and many difficulties made in the smooth and organized formation of the collectives.

Moreover, this hostile agitation led to the wholesale slaughter of their cows, sheep, and other livestock—a loss to agriculture which it took many years to make good.

Stalin's famous article which appeared in the Soviet Press, March 2, 1930, entitled "Dizziness from Success," drew striking attention to these, in some cases, genuine mistakes of policy, in others conscious sabotaging acts. In this article Stalin insisted on the purely voluntary nature of collectivization, protested against the forcible inclusion in the Kolkhozy of the members' dwellings, poultry, cow, etc. He also deprecated very strongly the attempt to organize fully-fledged agricultural communes in districts where the conditions were not ripe. He further insisted that the main object at that time—in 1930—was the organization of grain collectives. It was necessary above all to solve the problem of the production of a sufficiency of grain and when that had been attained, main attention could then be paid to the organization of animal breeding and dairy farms. We quote just one passage in order to illustrate the nature of Stalin's article:

"The success of our collective policy is explained, incidentally, by the fact that this policy rests upon the *voluntary* nature of the collective movement, and a consideration of the *diverse conditions* in the different

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sections of the U.S.S.R. The collectives cannot be organized by force. That would be stupid and reactionary.

"The collective movement must depend on the active support of the basic masses of the peasantry. We cannot mechanically transplant to undeveloped regions types of collectives adapted to developed regions. That would also be stupid and reactionary. Such a 'policy' would with one blow destroy the idea of collectivization. It is necessary to consider carefully the diverse conditions in the different districts of the U.S.S.R. and to adapt the rate and methods of the organization of collectives to these conditions. Foremost in the collective movement are the grain-growing sections. Why? Because in these sections we have the greatest number of collective and State farms already firmly established, and therefore the peasants have had an opportunity to become convinced of the strength and importance of the new technical methods, of the strength and importance of the new collective organization of agriculture.

"Because these areas have behind them two years of struggle with the kulaks during grain collection campaigns which cannot but have facilitated the Kolkhoz movement. Because these areas during recent years have been supplied intensively with the best cadres from the industrial centres.

"Can it be said that these especially favourable conditions exist also in other districts, such as, for instance, the consuming regions inhabited by nationalities which are still backward, such as Turkestan? Certainly not. It is clear that one of the most important prerequisites for a vigorous collective movement is that it should be voluntary and adapted to the diverse conditions of the different parts of the U.S.S.R. . . ."

When this article reached the villages, it exercised an enormous effect upon the peasantry. True, a number of peasants who had been forced into the Kolkhozy withdrew, but it opened the eyes of large numbers of the poor and middle peasants to the genuine aims and policy of the Government, and when those who had at first held back saw the benefits accruing to the members of the Kolkhozy and the help constantly given the latter by the State, the number of peasant households flocking into the collectives increased steadily.

The attempt to organize Kolkhozy and Sovkhozy was made very soon after the Bolshevik Revolution as mentioned in the preceding chapter, and by 1928, the number of Sovkhozy was

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3,125, including subsidiary agricultural enterprises, cultivating 1,735,000 hectares. By 1932 there were 10,203 Sovkhozy cultivating 13,557,000 hectares.

The number of Kolkhozy in 1928 was 33,300, embracing 417,700 former individual peasant farms and cultivating a total of 1,370,000 hectares or 1·2 per cent of the total area cultivated by the peasantry in the U.S.S.R. In the First Five-Year Plan it was sought to bring into the collectives by the end of 1932 some 5,000,000 individual peasant households and to bring the area under cultivation by the Kolkhozy to 14,500,000 hectares, or 20 per cent of the total area sown by peasants in the country. But so well had the policy of collectivization succeeded that by the end of 1932, there were 211,050 Kolkhozy embracing no less than 14,707,700 former individual peasant farms and cultivating 91,579,000 hectares, or 75·6 per cent of the total land cultivated by the peasants.

As we pointed out, the Government did everything in its power to encourage the formation of the Kolkhozy—one of the chief measures taken by the authorities at the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan was the formation of machine tractor stations for the supply of tractors and other agricultural machinery and implements to the Kolkhozy. These stations also gave advice and sent expert agronomists where necessary, etc. By the end of 1930 there were 637 such stations, and by the end of 1932, i.e. by the completion of the First Five-Year Plan, there were 2,446 machine tractor stations. The total area sown increased from 112,990,000 hectares in 1928 to 134,430,000 hectares in 1932 (in 1913, 105,500,000 hectares were cultivated).

The area under grain crops increased from 92,170,000 hectares in 1928 to 99,710,000 hectares in 1932 (94,360,000 in 1913), and the area under industrial crops (flax, cotton, sugar-beet, etc.), which totalled 4,550,000 hectares in 1913 and 8,620,000 in 1928, increased to 14,880,000 in 1932.

At the same time numerous schools and colleges and courses were organized for the study of the theory and practice of scientific agriculture, and hundreds of thousands of young peasants

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attended these courses whilst millions of others attended practical courses for improving their skill.

How all this progress and that made in the course of the Second Five-Year Plan has influenced the life of the peasant and his family, we shall deal with in later chapters.

The progress made in other departments of the national economy and in the life of the people during the First Five-Year Plan was no less striking.

Transport was, and to a large extent still is perhaps, the weakest link in the chain of the national economy of the U.S.S.R. This, however, was, and is not, due to any neglect in the development of transport, but mainly to the enormous demands made on the transport system by the exceptionally high rate of development of industry and agriculture.

In 1928, the length of railway lines in operation was already 76,837 kilometres as compared with 58,549 kilometres in 1913. By the end of 1932 the length had increased to 83,300 kilometres; but in accordance with the original Five-Year Plan the length should have been 94,000 kilometres by October 1, 1933. The freight carried, calculated in ton kilometres, was 65,700,000,000 in 1913; 93,400,000,000 in 1928; and 169,300,000,000 in 1932. The figure for 1932-33 in the Five-Year Plan was 162,700,000,000 ton kilometres.

In general, the development of the railways proceeded, in accordance with the planned development of the national economy, particularly rapidly in the hitherto backward areas. Of the 14,000 kilometres of new lines the construction of which started during the Five-Year Plan, and of the 6,400 completed and set into operation by the end of 1932, about 80 per cent were in the Eastern areas of the U.S.S.R. The most important of the new railways constructed in the course of the Five-Year Plan was the Turk-Sib Railway which linked up Central Asia and Siberia and created vast possibilities for the development of the productive forces of outlying districts which formerly had practically no means of communication with industrial centres.

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Similarly, considerable progress was made with the construction of new roads and of road, river, and marine transport. In the case of aviation, not only were aeroplane construction works erected and a number of important air freight and passenger lines opened between important points of the country, but aviation was used to an ever-growing extent in agriculture—for the destruction of farm and forest pests, sowing, land surveying, etc. During 1932, Soviet aviation laid the foundation for the aerial opening up of the Arctic, as well as rendering valuable aid to Soviet ice-breakers in that region.

During the period of the First Five-Year Plan, the number of workers employed nearly doubled, increasing from 11,590,000 at the end of 1928 to 22,600,000 at the end of 1932; the number of women workers more than doubled during this period. Unemployment was completely eliminated in the U.S.S.R., and the average number of wage-earners in a worker's family increased from 1.2 at the end of 1928 to 1.5 at the end of 1932.

The policy pursued in regard to wages was directed generally to increasing the wages of the lowest paid workers, and particularly of workers engaged in the most important branches of industry, such as the coal and metallurgical workers.

As for the members of the Kolkhozy, the poor peasants who had joined them had, by 1932, raised their standard of life to that of the former middle peasants.

Huge sums were spent on housing and the health services. As regards the latter, the progress made may be gauged from the facts that the number of hospital beds increased from 246,100 at the end of 1928 to 356,000 by the end of 1932; the number of medical service stations attached to large factories and plants increased from 1,580 in 1928 to 5,674 in 1932.

There was a considerable expansion and improvement in the number of rest homes and sanatoria in health resorts and in the countryside on the outskirts of the big towns. As a result of all this and of the increased attention paid to the care of mothers and infants, the death-rate of the general population, and particularly the

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infantile death-rate, in 1932 fell by 31 per cent to 52 per cent in the various districts of the country as compared with 1913. Although in 1932, and indeed still at the present time, there was and is an acute housing shortage, nevertheless in most towns and generally in the old and particularly in the new industrial regions, a tremendous amount of house building was carried out. In the Urals, for instance, dwelling accommodation increased 2·5 times; in the Donetz, dwelling accommodation was doubled during the First Five-Year Plan, and the housing conditions of the workers, although still leaving much to be desired, improved enormously. The former clay huts in the Ukraine and other parts of the Soviet Union had in a number of areas given way to good modern flats. Large numbers of workers who in the towns formerly lived in cellars or attics or in overcrowded slum areas, now lived in the better parts of the old, big houses, or had small flats in new blocks of houses.

As for education, the First Five-Year Plan had a startling success. The aim was, as far as possible, to stamp out illiteracy, to institute universal compulsory elementary education, and to develop the technical and higher educational institutions.

By 1932, illiteracy, which by 1928 still claimed 46·1 per cent of the population as compared with about 79 per cent in 1913, fell to about 10 per cent. The number of children attending elementary and secondary schools increased from 11,600,000 in 1928 (in 1913 about 8,000,000) to nearly 22,000,000 in 1932.

The number of students in universities and higher technical institutions increased from about 160,000 in 1928 to over 500,000 in 1932. In technical colleges the number of students increased from 253,600 to 949,200. There were also great increases in the number of people attending Workers' Faculties and the factory workshop schools, etc.

In education, as in the national economy generally, special attention was paid to the new industrial areas and to the more backward areas, i.e. the areas inhabited by the national minorities. The number of pupils in schools, where such existed at all in Tsarist days, increased from four to ten times in these backward areas.

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Teaching both in the elementary and secondary schools, as well as in the technical colleges and universities, was conducted in the native languages of the people inhabiting the various districts. For some forty-two nationalities who had previously had no written language, such an one was worked out; in a number of cases where the alphabet was complicated and difficult to learn, it was Latinized.

Scientific institutes, museums, libraries, cottage reading-rooms, clubs, travelling (and where possible stationary) theatres, cinemas, and other cultural institutions were organized in the outlying districts. In 1927-28, newspapers were published in 48 different languages, by the beginning of 1932 in 63 languages; books in 1927-28 were published in 55 languages, in 1932 in 90 languages.

The success of the First Five-Year Plan was all the more remarkable since the world economic crisis, which started in 1929, although it did not hit the U.S.S.R. in the same way as other countries, nevertheless could not but affect her unfavourably. The fall in world prices, of course, resulted in the realization of less value for her exports; moreover, the frenzied anti-Soviet campaigns in Great Britain and other countries, the rupture of diplomatic relations with Great Britain (diplomatic relations were not restored till November 5, 1929, and a new trading agreement was signed April 16, 1930), forced the Soviet Government to modify their export and import plans. In addition, as a result of the increasing menace by Japan in the East from 1931 onwards, expenditure on defence in 1932 absorbed a greater amount than that originally estimated in the Plan.

In spite of all this, however, the U.S.S.R., which in 1928 was still, in the main, a backward agricultural country, which had only just emerged from the period of restoration of its industries wrecked by the world and civil wars, had become by 1932 a country with a highly organized socialist industry and large-scale collective agriculture, the proportion of the value of industrial output in the total value of the output of the national economy having increased from 40 per cent in 1927-28 to 70 per cent in 1932.

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THE First Five-Year Plan having laid the foundation for a real Socialist economy by the development of an up-to-date large-scale industry, particularly heavy industry—electrification, general and agricultural machine construction works, metallurgical plants, etc.—and having made a substantial step towards the organization of large-scale collective agriculture, the way was now open for the construction of a classless society by the complete elimination of capitalism in industry as well as the complete elimination of a capitalist, parasitic class in agriculture. These were the general objects of the Second Five-Year Plan.

As regards the details, the Second Five-Year Plan aimed at the completion of the technical reconstruction of the national economy and the further development of large-scale industry. It laid down a programme of vast development of metallurgy in the south and the Urals-Kuznetsk Basin; new metallurgical plants were to be constructed in Eastern Siberia and Far Eastern Area. The development of machine construction industry, including agricultural machinery (tractors, combines, etc.), machine tools, equipment for transport, the light and food industries, and the production of automobiles and locomotives, coal mining, the oil industry, etc., were to proceed at a greater pace than before. New electrical stations, chemical works, etc., were to be erected. A vast programme of prospecting for valuable minerals and for the development of new oil and coal regions was also drawn up.

More stress than hitherto was to be laid on the improvement in quality and in increasing the output of consumers' goods—light industry and food products.

It was proposed to invest in industry during the Second Five-Year Plan a total of 69.5 milliard roubles as against 25 milliard roubles invested during the First Five-Year Plan. Of the 69.5

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milliard roubles, 53·4 milliard roubles were to be invested in the heavy industries as against 21·3 milliard roubles so invested in the First Five-Year Plan, i.e. an increase of 2·5 times. In light and food industries 16·1 milliard roubles were to be invested as against 3·5 milliard roubles invested in the First Five-Year Plan, i.e. 4·6 times.

As regards agriculture, the Second Five-Year Plan provided for the completion of collectivization and the elimination of kulaks as a class from the villages; for the development of animal breeding, the organization of large creameries and the formation of co-operatives by the various village handicraftsmen. The mechanization of agriculture made possible by the development of the tractor and other agricultural machine construction industry was to proceed more rapidly than ever before. A total of 15·2 milliard roubles was to be invested in agriculture during the Second Five-Year Plan as compared with 9·7 milliard roubles so invested in the First Five-Year Plan. Extensive irrigation works were also to be undertaken.

In railways 17·5 milliard roubles were to be invested, i.e. 2·7 times that in the First Five-Year Plan and the existing main trunk lines were to be reconstructed and extended, whilst a number of new railways were to be constructed to link up the new industrial areas with the general transport system of the Republic. The Plan also provided for the electrification of many lines, etc.

In the First Five-Year Plan a beginning had been made to bring industry nearer the sources of the raw materials and to develop economically and culturally the outlying areas peopled by the more backward national minorities.

It will be well to recall here that in Tsarist Russia over three-quarters of the industrial output was given by four districts of European Russia, e.g. the Moscow, Ivanovo, and St. Petersburg Provinces and the Ukraine—outlying areas rich in a variety of raw materials and mineral resources, such as Siberia, the Caucasus, Transcaucasia, and Central Asia, received the traditional treatment

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meted out to their colonies by Imperialist Powers; they were used as sources of cheap raw materials, the natives being kept in a state of ignorance and poverty-stricken economic, social, and political backwardness.

At the same time the great natural resources throughout the country had never been adequately studied. Foreign and Russian capitalists, anxious for rapid profits, only sank capital in the development of natural resources where these were most readily accessible.

For instance, the iron and steel industry was confined almost entirely to the South of Russia. In 1913, the Donbas and Dniepr regions produced 74 per cent of all the pig-iron, the rest was produced in small, technically backward plants working on charcoal in the Urals and in the Central Region.

The production of coal was almost entirely concentrated in the Donbas region, which in 1913 yielded 87 per cent of all the coal output of the country.

Machine building, in any case but feebly developed, was concentrated mainly in the central regions, in the Moscow and St. Petersburg provinces and in the Ukraine.

The cotton textile industry was also grouped in the territory of the Moscow, Ivanovo, and St. Petersburg provinces. The linen industry was more than 50 per cent concentrated in the Ivanovo district, though the bulk of long-fibre flax was produced in the Western Region, White Russian, and other regions.

The entire sugar industry was concentrated in the Ukraine and the Central Black Earth Region.

Pursuing the work started in the First Five-Year Plan, the Second Five-Year Plan made a still more determined effort to bring about the rational distribution of the productive forces of the country. Whilst not neglecting the old industrial areas, new electrical power stations, machine construction, metallurgical, coal, oil, and other industries were to be developed intensively in the Central Volga areas, Tatar Republic, Urals, Western and Eastern

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Siberia, Bashkiria, Far East, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia. About half of the total investments in the new heavy industrial constructions were allocated to the Far Eastern areas.

Not only plants for the heavy industries, but also those for the light and food industries were to be constructed in the hitherto most backward areas; for instance, textile plants in Transcaucasia, Siberia, and Central Asia, the Western District, etc.; new sugar refineries in Western Siberia, Kirghizia, Transcaucasia, etc. In general, all kinds of enterprises of the food, heavy and light industries were to be constructed in the basic regions producing the required raw products.

Similar plans of development were outlined for transport, municipal constructions, education, etc.

Above all, it was necessary in the course of the Second Five-Year Plan to ensure the thorough mastery of modern machinery and technique by the workers, to train a sufficiency of loyal Soviet scientists and specialists, to raise the productivity of labour and to reduce the cost of production.

Such was the broad outline of the plan, and we are now in a position to gauge not only the success of the plan, but also the whole achievements of the Soviets during the twenty years of the existence of the Soviet Government.

Skilled workmen and technicians cannot, of course, be trained overnight, and during the early years of the Second Five-Year Plan Soviet economy was faced with a number of difficulties arising from the lack of trained men to run the new modern enterprises. The result was that in these years the rate of increase in output was lower than in preceding years. Thus, in 1933, the plan for industry was not quite fulfilled, and the output of all industry only increased by 8·3 per cent as compared with 1932. But in 1934 the output of industry increased by 20 per cent as compared with 1933; in 1935 by 22 per cent as compared with 1934; in 1936 by 30 per cent as compared with 1935, and in 1937 by about 20 per cent as compared with 1936. It should be borne in mind that every per cent of increase in each succeeding year means a rising

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enormous increase in the actual output as compared with that of the preceding year.

According to the Five-Year Plan the value of large-scale industrial output in 1937 was to have been 92,700,000,000 roubles (in 1926-27 prices). Actually, taking industry as a whole, this plan was fulfilled by March 30, 1937, i.e. nine months ahead of schedule, and by the end of 1937 the value of the output was 4 per cent in excess of the plan. *Already in 1936 the output was 80·9 milliard roubles, or 7·3 times the pre-war output.*

In accordance with the plan to make the U.S.S.R. into a predominantly industrial country and independent of foreign countries, if necessary, particularly so far as the means of production are concerned, the greatest rate of increase has been in the output of producers' goods, the value of which in 1936 was 49·1 milliard roubles (in 1926-27 prices), as compared with 21·6 milliard roubles in 1932. In 1937, the value of the output was about 52·4 milliard roubles, so that during the five years the output of producers' goods has increased nearly two and a half times.

Most of the important branches of the heavy industries, machine construction (including agricultural machinery), pig-iron, steel, martensite, chemical products, coal, oil, electricity, etc., even in those cases where the plans have not been quite fulfilled, have increased their output enormously as compared with 1932, and still more as compared with pre-war.

The output of consumers' goods has not increased to the extent envisaged by the plan, nevertheless, in absolute values the increase has been very great; the value of consumers' goods in 1936 was 31·8 milliard roubles as compared with 17·2 milliard roubles in 1932; 9 milliard roubles in 1928, and only 6·3 milliard roubles in 1913. All these values are given in 1926-27 prices, so that they form an exact basis of comparison.

The output of the light industries in 1937 was 11·2 per cent in excess of the 1936 output and that of the food industries 13·6 per cent in excess of the 1936 output.

It is also interesting to note that whereas in 1913 the output

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of the means of production constituted 42·9 per cent of the total industrial output of Russia, in 1936 it constituted no less than 60·8 per cent of the total industrial output in the U.S.S.R. It is further important to note that more than three-quarters of the industrial output in the U.S.S.R. is now produced in enterprises constructed or completely reconstructed since the establishment of the Soviet Government. Of the total output of the means of production 87·4 per cent is being produced in such enterprises, whilst the proportion of consumers' goods so produced is 55·2 per cent. In the chemical industry the corresponding proportion is 95·2 per cent, in the ferrous metals 96·6 per cent, in the non-ferrous metals 76·6 per cent, in machine construction 88·3 per cent, etc. Nearly 91 per cent of the electrical stations are new.

Of course, most of the other old enterprises have also been greatly improved and re-equipped. The result of all this was that by the end of 1936 the U.S.S.R. had become first in Europe and second in the world in regard to gross industrial output. She stands first in Europe in regard to the output of general and agricultural machinery, motor lorries, iron ore, copper, gold, superphosphates, and sugar-beet. In the latter and in the output of combines she now takes first place in the world, and in all the rest of the above industries, except copper (in which she takes sixth place), she is second in the world.

In the output of electricity, steel, and aluminium the U.S.S.R. takes second place in Europe and third in the world; and she takes third place in Europe and fourth in the world in coal production, and fourth place in Europe and sixth place in the world in the construction of motor cars.

The productivity of labour has increased steadily, particularly during the Second Five-Year Plan. In pre-war Russia the productivity of labour was proverbially low, so much so that there had grown up a tradition about the laziness and shiftlessness of the Russian worker. Many would-be profound thinkers discoursed at length on the easy-going character of the Russian, his engaging but happy-go-lucky *nichevo* (no matter) if anything

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went wrong; on the natural, racial or what-not inability of the Russian to handle machinery, his want of practical, managerial ability; the Russian, they said, was by nature not mechanically-minded, etc.; and basing themselves on such "theories," they solemnly predicted that the Soviet Five-Year Plans would fail, for the Russian would never learn to handle machinery or to manage the huge enterprises being erected (in the early years of the First Five-Year Plan) with the help of foreign experts.

What these gentry altogether failed to realize was that organizational ability and skill in the handling of machinery are characteristics which do not depend on whether a man or woman is born in Britain, Russia, Japan, or Timbuktu, but on whether in the given country there is scope for developing these characteristics. In every country people are born with varying degrees of mechanical and organizing ability, but how many will become skilled and manifest such abilities naturally depends on the opportunity given for developing and practising them.

The *nichevo* characteristic was highly developed in Russia because the Tsarist authorities kept the country economically and culturally backward and allowed the economic exploitation of the country, such as it was, to be carried out largely by foreign capitalists, who employed mainly their own nationals as managers, etc., the Russian workers, being, figuratively speaking, mere "hewers of wood and drawers of water." There was little modern scientific farming in Tsarist Russia and, in any case, the vast masses of the peasantry had too little land and were too poor to go in for such farming, even had they been permitted to learn anything about it—hence the *nichevo* psychology, the dependence on nature in the village, on foreign technical experts in the town; the lack of skill and the low productivity of labour.

The Soviet authorities have been able to change all this because the economic and social organization of society has been changed. Instead of the private capitalist, foreign or native, running enterprises for private profit and out to exploit the last ounce to be squeezed from the toilers, we have the State running the industry

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of the country for the benefit of the people. Labour-saving machinery is introduced, organization and labour methods improved, not merely because in this way running costs can be reduced, but with the object of reducing heavy toil and increasing output for the benefit of all, making it possible to raise wages, reduce prices of commodities, and (or) hours of work.

Instead of the Government hindering industrial progress—even capitalist—as happened in Tsarist days, the Soviet Government has done and is doing all it can to expand industry and to organize it on modern lines. Instead of keeping the population deliberately ignorant and illiterate, the schools, technical colleges and universities have been opened wide for the whole people, and apart from the compulsory education of children, young workers, and old ones too, are not only permitted, but are urged to take advantage of the educational facilities provided by the State. By the end of 1936, more than two-thirds of the workers in the large-scale industries of the U.S.S.R. had attended technical courses. The result of all this is that the old careless, slow, unskilled, Russian worker is steadily becoming merely a memory.

In the U.S.S.R., far more than in any other country, the young people, both boys and girls, are flocking into the technical schools and colleges; they dream of becoming skilled engineers, skilled railway and canal builders, machine and road constructors, architects, agronomists, aviators, builders of aeroplanes, scientists, explorers, etc.

Gone is the habit of endless talk and mere theorizing, they are all burning to be up and doing, and theory and so-called pure science, the importance of which must not and is not underrated, now goes hand in hand with practical work.

During the last few years a powerful spontaneous Stakhanovite movement has arisen. What is this movement? Stakhanovism is essentially a movement of rank-and-file workers who, having mastered modern technique, seek by rationalizing the organization of labour processes to reach a higher output in the section, plant or industry in which they work. Such a voluntary, spontaneous,

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rank-and-file movement to raise productivity of labour could only take place in a country in which the workers are also the masters; in a country where the workers know that every increase in productivity, every introduction of labour-saving devices, will lead not to unemployment and to an increase of profits for an upper non-working class, but to a real rise in the standard of life of the workers themselves; to a rise in wages, to a reduction in prices, to an increased expenditure on all forms of social insurance, on education, and to an increase in the amenities of life generally; and should productivity increase sufficiently it would lead to a further reduction in the hours of work. In his speech on the twentieth anniversary of the Soviet Revolution delivered November 6, 1937, Molotov, Chairman of People's Commissars, very pertinently said:

“In our country ordinary working men and women, ordinary collective farm men and women who have shown good examples of work in production become generally known and respected. In what country is it possible for Stakhanovites from among the ordinary workers and peasants who but yesterday were known to no one to become the best-known figures and the favourites of the people, only because they have shown good examples of work in the factory or other public enterprise? Can anything of the kind be possible in the bourgeois countries, where no one is interested in the actual work that the worker does and where the master for whom the worker works is interested in one thing only—in the profits which he receives from this work?”

The way in which the new conditions have influenced the minds of the new generation of Soviet workers is illustrated in the speeches at the Congress of Stakhanovites held in the Kremlin, November 14-17, 1935. Young Stakhanov himself, a Donetsk miner, who initiated this movement when on August 5, 1935, using a pneumatic pick and aided by two timbermen, he caused a sensation by hewing 102 tons of coal in his six-hour shift instead of the usual seven tons, explained his attitude thus:

“When I read Comrade Stalin's speech at the graduation of students of the Military Academy on May 4th, when he said that machinery in the charge of people who have mastered technique can and should

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perform miracles, it set me thinking seriously on how I could increase my own production."

Stakhanov explained how he set to work, and continued:

"The important thing, of course, is not for a few dozen or even a hundred miners to set records. Our task lies in this, that the new high level of coal production should become the average for all miners. This is already taking place. We already have in our mine more than a hundred men who produce three, four, and more times the norm."

Maria Vinogradova, a young woman textile worker, also explained how the need to increase the productivity of labour had set her and her sister thinking on how best to organize their work. She continued:

"My sister and I went to the manager of the mill and asked him to let each of us operate one hundred looms. He was willing to grant our request, but eventually gave us only ninety-four looms. Dusya and I were terribly disappointed, and insisted on being allowed to operate one hundred looms, and in the end he yielded to our demands.

"Later on, when we learned that other weavers undertook to operate 140 looms, we decided to take 144. And now we are not only efficiently handling 144 looms each, but have plenty of time to carry out voluntary social work as well. And if any weaver will undertake to operate 144 looms, we will take 150. And if anyone takes 150, we will take 200 looms. We will not yield the palm to anyone."

And similarly delegate after delegate related his or her experience, appealing to other workers to follow their example.

Stalin himself, in a speech delivered at the Congress, gave a masterly exposition of the causes which gave rise to Stakhanovism. He said:

"There are at least four causes:

"(1) First of all, the radical improvement in the material condition of the workers is the basis of the Stakhanov movement. *Life has become better, comrades, life has become more joyous. And when one lives joyfully work hums.* Hence the high norms of output. Hence the heroes and heroines of labour. Herein, first of all, lies the root of the Stakhanov movement. Had there been a crisis in our country, had there been unemployment—the scourge of the working class—had we lived poorly,

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wretchedly, not joyfully, then there would have been no Stakhanov movement in our country. Our Proletarian Revolution is the only revolution in the world which has succeeded in bringing to the people not only political but also material results.

“Of all the workers’ revolutions we know only one which had gained power. This was the Paris Commune. But it did not exist for long. It is true it tried to break the chains of capitalism, but it did not have time to break them, still less had it time to show beneficial, material results.

“Our Revolution is the only one which not only broke the chains of capitalism and gave freedom to the people, but also succeeded in giving the people the material conditions for a well-to-do life. Herein lies the force and the invincibility of our Revolution. Of course, it is good to drive out the capitalists, to drive out the landlords, to drive out the Tsarist officials, to take power and to gain freedom. This is very good. But, unfortunately, freedom alone is far from sufficient. If there is not enough bread, not enough butter and fats, not enough cloth, if housing is bad, you will not go far on freedom alone. It is very difficult, comrades, to live with freedom alone.

“To be able to live well and joyfully it is necessary that material benefits should be added to the benefits of political liberty. The characteristic peculiarity of our Revolution consists in the fact that it gives to the people not only freedom, but also material benefits, also the possibility of leading a well-to-do and cultured life. This is why life in our country has become joyful, and it is on this soil that the Stakhanov movement has grown up.

“(2) The second source of the Stakhanov movement is the absence in our country of exploitation. People work in our country not for exploiters, not to enrich idlers, but for themselves, for their own class, for their own Soviet society, where the best people of the working class are in power. It is for this reason that *labour in our country has social significance, that it is a matter of honour and glory.*

“Under capitalism labour has a private, personal character. If you have worked more, you receive more and live for yourself as you know best. Nobody knows you or wants to know you. You work for capitalists, you enrich them. And how can it be otherwise? It is for that you were hired, to enrich the exploiters. You do not agree with this? Then join the ranks of the unemployed and eke out an existence as best you can—we shall find others more tractable. It is for this reason that the labour of people is not highly valued under capitalism. *It is comprehensible that in such conditions there cannot be a place for a Stakhanov movement.* It is a different matter under the Soviet system.

“Here the man of labour is held in honour. Here he works not for

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exploiters but for himself, for his class, for society. Here the man of labour cannot feel himself neglected and alone. On the contrary, he feels himself to be a free citizen of his country, a kind of public figure. And if he works well and gives to society what he is able to give he is a hero of labour, he is covered with glory. Naturally, only under such conditions could the Stakhanov movement arise.

"(3) The third source of the Stakhanov movement is the existence in our country of a modern technique. The Stakhanov movement is organically connected with this new technique. Without it the technical norms might be doubled or trebled, but no more. If Stakhanovites have raised technical norms five times and six times, it is because they base themselves solely and entirely on the new technique. It thus works out that the industrialization of our country, the reconstruction of our factories and mills, the presence of new technique and new equipment have served as one of the causes which gave birth to the Stakhanov movement.

"(4) But with new technique alone you will also not go far. One can have first-rate technical equipment, first-rate factories and mills, but if there are no people capable of mastering this technique it will remain bare technique. If it is to give results, it is necessary to have people, cadres of working men and women, capable of taking charge of this technique and advancing it. The birth and growth of the Stakhanov movement mean that we already have such cadres of working men and women.

"Two years ago the party said that in building new factories and mills and in giving our enterprises new equipment we had done only half of the work. The party then said that the enthusiasm for construction of new factories should be supplemented by the enthusiasm for their mastery, that only in this way could the work be finished. Clearly, during these last two years there has been a mastering of this new technique and the birth of new cadres. It is self-evident that without such cadres, without these new people, there would be no Stakhanov movement in our country. . . ."

It may be pointed out here that Stakhanovism can be regarded essentially as the up-to-date version of the voluntary movement of the Soviet workers to increase productivity which occurred practically on the morrow of the Soviet Revolution. At first it expressed itself in the sacrifice by thousands of workers—both manual and brain workers—of their free Saturday afternoons and

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Sundays, in order to move forward a job—such as the building of a factory or road, harvesting or sowing, etc—which was of importance to the whole people. Later the movement took the forms of socialist competition or rather emulation between various sections in factories, railways, collective and State farms as to which worker or group of workers would produce the most and the best products; later again this emulation was taken a stage farther by a factory or institution challenging a similar factory or institution to a competition as to who would work best during a given period, etc.

Now, however, with the introduction of modern technique and its mastery by hundreds of thousands, Stakhanovism has arisen—not for the mere personal gain of a given Stakhanovite (although their wages have increased enormously), but mainly in order to bring about the utilization and exploitation of modern technique to the utmost limit for the good of the country generally.

The result of the mastery of modern methods of work and of the spread of Stakhanovism is that in 1936 the value of the average output per worker in industry was more than three times that in 1913.

To take a few specific examples: first, in regard to the supply of electricity upon which to a large extent modern industrial technique is based. In 1913, the total power of the electric stations amounted to 1·1 million kilowatts furnishing 1·9 milliard kilowatt hours of electrical energy. In 1928, the power of the electric stations was 1·9 million kilowatts, with an output of 5·0 milliard kilowatt hours, but in 1936 the power of stations amounted to 7·5 million kilowatts with an output of 32·8 milliard kilowatt hours. In 1937 the output of electrical energy was 36·6 milliard kilowatt hours.

The Soviet works now manufacture turbo-generators of 25,000 and 50,000 kilowatts, and even 100,000 kilowatts for the electrical and the electrical heating stations, as well as powerful transformers and all kinds of other equipment for the electrical industry.

In 1924 there were still no hydro-electrical stations in the U.S.S.R., now there are several such stations; the Dniepr hydro-electric station alone produced more electricity in 1936 than all

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the electrical stations put together in Tsarist Russia in 1913. The U.S.S.R. now takes first place in the world in regard to her central electric heating stations, which in 1935 already had a capacity of 1,110,000 kilowatts. Up to 1928, new stations with a total power of 500,000 kilowatts had been set into operation. During the First Five-Year Plan, new stations with a capacity of 2,772,000 kilowatts had been set into operation, and in the four years 1933-36, stations with a capacity of 2,753,000 kilowatts were set into operation, whilst in 1937 a further 1,469,000 kilowatts were set into operation.

In 1930, the machine tool industry only produced thirty different types of such tools, but by 1936 the number had risen to over two hundred, mostly of a technically higher and more modern type. In 1931, in the Molotov Motor Works at Gorki, 81 per cent of the different parts incorporated in the cars and lorries they produced were imported from abroad; at the present time not only can and do they manufacture all these parts themselves, but they produce entirely new Soviet types in no way inferior to the best produced in the U.S.A. and other countries. The same is true of the construction of tractors, combines, and other agricultural machinery.

Up to 1930, the U.S.S.R. only constructed low-power railway locomotives; now, however, the Soviet works construct powerful engines which draw trains twice as heavy as in 1930 and at $1\frac{1}{2}$ times the speed.

As regards coal, in 1924 only one area, the Donetz Basin, was, as before the war, being exploited on a considerable scale; here coal was produced mostly in small out-of-date pits. Now, however, not only have the Donetz coal mines been brought up to date and largely mechanized, but new coal deposits are being exploited in the Kuznetsk Basin, sub-Moscow Basin, Karaganda, as well as in other areas such as the Urals and the Far East. The output of coal in the Donetz alone has trebled as compared with 1913, and the total Soviet output of coal in 1936 was 126,400,000 tons as compared with 29,100,000 tons in 1913, i.e. 4.3 times as much.

Similarly, the output of oil in 1936 was 29,293,000 tons, as

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compared with 9,234,000 tons in 1913, and whereas in Tsarist Russia only 5·9 per cent of the output had been obtained by mechanical means, some 98 per cent of the output is now produced by such means. By 1936, the output of benzene was 19·6 times and of kerosene 3·7 times that in 1913.

The metallurgical industry has been completely reconstructed, huge plants with the best modern equipment having been erected, such, for instance, as the Magnitogorsk which alone has an output of pig-iron 2·5 times the total output in Poland. The output of pig-iron of the Magnitogorsk and Kuznetsk plants exceeds that of the whole of Japan by about 30 per cent, whilst the output of these two works together with the Makeev metallurgical works exceeded in 1936 the total output of pig-iron in Tsarist Russia.

In 1936 the total output of pig-iron was 3·4 times that in 1913, the output of steel was 3·9 times that in 1913, and of martensite 3·4 times that in 1913.

Similar progress has been made in the output of the non-ferrous metals, the chemical industry, etc.

Peat production, which before the Revolution was based completely on hand labour, was 52·4 per cent mechanized by 1936. In the lumber industry, labour processes were 39·7 per cent mechanized. Mechanized timber felling and hauling equipment has also been introduced. In the glass industry, which was entirely handicraft before the Revolution, 83·7 per cent of window glass was produced by glass-drawing machines in 1936.

The synthetic rubber industry, which is entirely a child of the Soviets, now practically satisfies the Soviet demand for rubber. The light and food industries, though their rate of development have not been so high as that of the heavy industries, have nevertheless left the 1913 output far behind. For instance, in 1937, about 170,700,000 pairs of leather footwear were produced as compared with 8,300,000¹ in 1913. The three factories Skorokhod in Lenin-

¹ This is the output in factories, but in pre-war Russia most of the boots and shoes were produced by small handicraft workers. If the latter is included, the output is estimated at 20,000,000 pairs.

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grad, the Parizheskaya Kommuna in Moscow, and the Mikoyan factory in Rostov-on-Don, together gave an output four times that of the whole of Tsarist Russia in 1913.

The value of the output of the food industry in 1936 was 4·4 times that in 1913. In 1937, the output was 13·6 per cent in excess of that in 1936. More than two-thirds of the entire haul of the fishing industry in 1936 was obtained by using mechanical equipment. In 1936, one hundred different kinds of sausages were manufactured and the total output was 3·7 times that in 1932, of pork 6·4 times, white bread 4 times, butter 2·6 times, Soviet-grown tea 7 times that in 1932. The destruction of surplus food which sometimes occurs in other countries is absolutely unthinkable in the U.S.S.R.

In Tsarist Russia there were no large-scale mechanized bakeries; in 1936 there were 286 such bakeries producing 29·2 per cent of the total bread baked.

In Tsarist Russia there were no big meat-packing plants; in the U.S.S.R. 24 such plants have been constructed giving 33·5 per cent of the output of meat preserves. And so one could proceed with the comparison indefinitely; but enough has been said to prove that in twenty years (of which at least five years were spent in the struggle to maintain the power of the Soviets against the Russian "Whites" and foreign interventionists) the Soviet Union has emerged from a backward agrarian country into a modern highly industrialized State, in which more than three-quarters of the total output of goods is produced in works newly constructed by the Soviet Government and in old works which have been extended and reconstructed to such an extent as to have become to all intents and purposes new works.

Transport has made equally important progress.

Many new railways have been constructed to link up the new industrial areas with the centre of the country. A number of important lines have been double-tracked and the old permanent way renewed. Particularly important is the double-tracking of the trans-Siberian line and the construction of the Turkestan-Siberian

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line (the Turksib Railway). The latter links Siberia with Kazakhstan and Central Asia and another line, the Karaganda-Balkhash Railway, recently opened, links up the Turksib and Omsk railways, enabling Karaganda coal and Balkhash copper to be easily transported to Central Asia.

During 1937, some 4,918 kilometres of new railway was under construction, whilst 5,117 kilometres of second tracks were being laid on existing railway lines. In addition, some 440 kilometres of track was electrified, making a total of electrified railway lines of 1,600 kilometres. These include the electrification of lines in Baku and near Moscow, in the Caucasus, Siberia, the Urals, in the Ukraine, the Volga provinces, etc.

Particularly important is the electrification of the 184 kilometre line Apatit-Murmansk. This line passes across the Kola peninsula and is the most Northern main railway line in the U.S.S.R. In 1938 electrification is to be considerably speeded up.

When appraising the progress made by the Soviet railways during the last twenty years, it is necessary also to bear in mind not only the backward state of the Russian railways in 1914, but, as has been mentioned in an earlier chapter, the terrible havoc wrought on the Russian railway system by the civil war and intervention. It is estimated that during this period about one-quarter of the pre-war permanent way and rolling stock had been rendered useless, some 7,762 bridges were wholly or partially blown up and 34 repair shops, 480 water tanks, thousands of telegraph and telephone lines, 10,800 telephonic apparatus, 4,300 telegraphic apparatus, as well as hundreds of stations, etc., were destroyed.

Professor Lomonosov¹ has declared:

"During the civil war the Siberian railways and the railways of South-Eastern European Russia were destroyed or ruined. General Denikin and his co-workers showed wonderful skill in the destruction of railways. They blew up all bridges and water supplies, ran locomotives into rivers from blown-up bridges, and systematically burnt all rolling stock. I was in China during the Boxer riots, and can bear witness to the fact that the havoc caused by the Boxers on Chinese railways was

¹ See p. 60.

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child's play compared to the work of General Denikin and his foreign specialists."

All who visited Soviet Russia shortly after the conclusion of the war bore out this evidence. For instance, Sir Benjamin Robertson, K.C.M.G., K.C.S.I., who went to Russia in December 1921, "with the concurrence of His Majesty's Government and at the request of the Russian Famine Relief Fund and the British Red Cross Society" and returned to London in February 1922, in the course of a statement, said that: "the rails, sleepers and beds of the Russian railways were in such a state of dilapidation and decay that as soon as the frozen snow, which was holding the lines together, thawed, the railways would for all practical purposes cease to exist."

But the Soviet engineers and workers set to work and not only did the railways not "cease to exist," but within the short period of less than fifteen years built up a railway system many times superior to that of pre-war Russia.

Stakhanov methods of work are taking firm root in the railways. Trains which a few years ago, owing to the fact that railway organization had not kept pace with the heavy demands made upon the railway system, were continually late in starting and arriving, now, for the most part, run with exemplary punctuality.

The speeding up and reorganization of the railways which followed the appointment of that remarkably energetic and capable Commissar, L. M. Kaganovich, and the subsequent spread of Stakhanovism on the railways, has led to a reduction in running costs, and an increase in the productivity of labour per worker, both in 1936 and 1937. There has been a decrease in the number of accidents, a considerable rise (23·7 per cent) in wages, and a slight decrease (2·2 per cent) in the number of workers employed on the railways.

As in other branches of the national economy, so on the railways, there has been an energetic drive to increase the skill and qualifications of the workers, and nearly 930,000 railwaymen of all classes have attended technical courses during 1937.

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An important innovation on the Soviet railways is the provision in Moscow and other junctions of long-distance travel of special waiting-rooms for mothers and children. These rooms are equipped with milk kitchens, cots, toys, etc., and nurses and doctors are in attendance. Here a mother on a long-distance journey, who has to wait some time for a connection, can leave her young children, secure that they will be well looked after, fed, washed and amused, while she can go off sight-seeing or shopping or visiting. Similarly, special carriages are also provided on long-distance trains for mothers with children.

Perhaps special mention should be made of the magnificent Moscow electrical underground. The first section, over $11\frac{1}{2}$ kilometres in length, was opened in May 1935; the second section, nearly 15 kilometres in length, was opened at the end of 1937, and work on the third section is now proceeding. This railway, with its wide platforms, its beautiful decorations and artistic lighting, finely designed stations, its facings of marble, hewn stone and composition, each station with its own character and colour scheme, has been acclaimed by all who have seen it as a real work of art.

It is sometimes suggested that much of the money spent on building such a sumptuous railway or such fine theatres and national buildings—such as the palaces of the pioneers in Leningrad, Kharkov, Moscow, and other towns, the Moscow palace of Soviets, work on which is now proceeding—might be saved if simpler more ordinary designs were adopted and the money spent rather on the additional housing so badly required; but the Soviet authorities regard these fine structures as necessities; apart from their utility, they serve a two-fold aim: in the first place they are educative and being solid structures which will stand for scores of years, for generations, it would be uneconomical to have to rebuild them on a finer model after all the housing requirements had been fulfilled. These fine structures are also intended to form the artistic tastes of the people, to teach them to demand the best from their workers and representatives; secondly, being designed

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and constructed by Soviet workers, they breed self-confidence, they convince the people that they are capable of as fine mechanical feats as the most skilled foreign workers. Moreover, the Moscow underground and other fine constructions give the people a living proof of the great economic and cultural progress made by the Soviets.

In a speech at his election meeting at Leningrad, November 26, 1937, Kalinin, speaking of the opportunities given to Soviet architects and the intelligentsia generally, bore out our view in regard to such a construction as the Moscow underground. He said: "Our people say to the architect: 'Plan us an underground; but since this will be used by the masses, give no thought to profit making, but remember that people will have to travel on this underground to and from work; think how to make the journey as little fatiguing as possible. . . .'

"When we give an order to an architect he is told that the building must be such as will satisfy the needs of the people, their conveniences, their artistic demands."

The roads of Tsarist Russia were notoriously bad. It was a standing joke at the time that the Government kept them in that state in order to keep out an invader, this being their best and most efficient means of defence. The present day Soviet Union has more convenient and more effective methods of keeping out a foreign invader.

The world and civil wars naturally did not improve the roads, and although an enormous amount of road building will be required before the U.S.S.R. can make much boast of its roads, nevertheless the last twenty years has brought about considerable improvement. During the period 1931-35, about 185,000 kilometres of new roads had been built and on January 1, 1935, the made roads in the U.S.S.R. totalled 1,368,000 kilometres, of which 160,600 kilometres were crowned and improved gravel roads, and 61,000 kilometres hard-surface roads. A number of republics and regions which formerly had practically no good roads at all, have built long tracks of excellent roads during the last decade. Particularly im-

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portant are the highways at present under construction connecting Moscow with Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine, a distance of 866 kilometres, and another road connecting Moscow with Minsk, capital of White Russia, a distance of 655 kilometres. These roads, now partially completed, are 16 metres wide and built of concrete and asphalt.

Extensive work in highway construction has also been done in the Caucasus, in Central Asia, in Siberia, and in other outlying parts of the Soviet Union, which has considerably increased the amenities of the population in the various national republics.

A road some 730 kilometres long was built through the Tien-Shan range (the Celestial Mountains) in the Kirghiz Republic, thus making accessible the different parts of this republic by car. Similarly, roads across the frontier mountains now connect up the U.S.S.R. with Outer Mongolia and Tana-Tuva Republic.

The Osh-Khorog (Road in the Clouds) Road, which was completed in 1936, cuts right through the Pamirs and is 754 kilometres long. This is said to be the highest motor road in the world and reaches an altitude of 4,700 metres at the passes. The Stalinabad-Garm road crosses the ravines of the Western Pamirs.

The new Amur-Yakut motor road in Siberia runs from the railway deep into the country, a distance of 869 kilometres, by way of the Yablon mountain passes. In the past there were no roads in this district.

The largest cities are being connected by motor routes; for instance such as Moscow-Leningrad; Moscow-Minsk; Moscow-Gorky-Sverdlovsk-Uralsk; Moscow-Kharkov-Tiflis; Leningrad-Kiev-Odessa; Kharkov-Kiev; Kharkov-Sevastopol, etc.

At the same time motor car and motor lorry construction has, as we have seen, expanded enormously. Whilst Tsarist Russia had in 1913 only 8,900 motor vehicles, of which about 1,000 were lorries, in 1936, the U.S.S.R. had 386,000, i.e. 43 times as many. During the Five-Year Plans, the number of motor cars has increased seven times and the number of motor buses five times. The output of motor lorries in 1936 was 133,000; in 1937 it was

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182,000. The number of cars in use in 1937 was almost double that in 1936.

About 95 per cent of the foreign exports of the U.S.S.R., which mainly consists of goods such as grain, timber, ores, oil, etc., is shipped by sea.

In 1913 the total tonnage of the Russian mercantile fleet was 757,000 tons, 500,000 of which were steam-driven and 257,000 tons sailing vessels.

During the civil war much of this tonnage was destroyed, whilst other vessels were taken abroad by the "White Guards" and sold to foreign countries, with the result that by the end of 1922 the mercantile fleet was reduced to 162,000 tons. At the same time most of the shipbuilding centres had been destroyed during the civil war.

Restoration began in 1923 when existing vessels were either reconditioned or scrapped. A number of ships was purchased abroad and a beginning was made with the construction in the country of freight boats. The first four steamers from Soviet shipyards were completed in 1927.

However, shipbuilding began in earnest with the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan, and by the beginning of 1936, Soviet marine tonnage had increased to 1,350,000 tons, whilst the freight carried increased from 8,548,200 tons in 1929 to 28,646,900 tons in 1936.

Much has also been done in the construction of new marine ports and the reconditioning and re-equipment of old ports. The number of mechanized wharves has increased from 10 in 1913 to more than 100 in 1937. In addition to the improvement of mechanical equipment, many warehouses, sheds, wharves and cold-storage warehouses have been erected. The U.S.S.R. has also built a number of ports on the Azov, White and Black Seas, on the Pacific Coast and in the Arctic.

The U.S.S.R. has some of the finest rivers in the world; their total length is 400,000 kilometres, of which about 101,000 kilometres are navigable, and river transport in the Soviet Union had taken first place in Europe by 1932. In 1928, a total of 18,407,700

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tons of goods were transported along the Soviet rivers, but by 1936 nearly 70,000,000 tons were so transported. The number of passengers carried increased from 17,780,000 in 1928 to 48,206,500 in 1936.

Three exceptionally important constructions for the improvement of the Soviet waterways have been carried out during the last fifteen years. The first was the conversion of the Dniepr into a navigable river along its whole length from Kiev to Kherson by the construction of weirs and sluices to overcome the rapids which had hitherto prevented the full utilization of this great river. At the same time a hydro-electrical station—the largest in the world—has been constructed, utilizing the water power of the river. This station was opened in 1932 and alongside new industries have developed and a new town with a population of over 120,000 inhabitants has grown up.

The next great construction was the White Sea Baltic Canal formally opened to navigation in June 1933. This canal, 227 kilometres long, running from Leningrad to Soroka, was constructed in less than two years, and connects the White Sea with the Baltic, reducing the distance between Leningrad and Archangel by some 2,000 miles. It now takes five days to do the journey instead of seventeen as formerly, when the journey had to be done around the Scandinavian coast. The Soviet people are particularly proud of this construction, because the whole work—a great engineering feat—was carried out entirely by Soviet engineers and workers without any foreign help and took only a fraction of the time required to build the much more simple Suez Canal (164 kilometres long) and the Panama Canal (81.3 kilometres long), both of which took decades to construct.

The third construction was one of the most important enterprises built under the Second Five-Year Plan, e.g. the Moscow-Volga Canal. In the building of this canal, as in that of the White Sea Baltic Canal, no foreign aid whatever was used. The length of the canal is 128 kilometres and the technical complexity of the work on the Moscow-Volga Canal was far above that of the

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Panama or any other canal ever constructed. The canal forms a complex combination of two hundred and forty structures, the chief of which are eleven locks, three concrete and eight hydro-electric power stations, nineteen railway and road bridges, two tunnels, passenger and freight landing stages, etc., as well as a special canal for water supply.

All the locks of the Moscow-Volga Canal have a central, automatic control, permitting any operation to be performed or stopped by the pressing of a button. In this way accidents through operator's errors will be impossible. For instance, the lower gates of a lock cannot be opened when the upper ones are open. The failure of any mechanism, for one reason or another, is immediately signalled automatically to the dispatcher in charge of the locks' central control station. The five pumping stations are amongst the most powerful in the world. All the pumping stations are also controlled from a single centre.

The Khimkinsky Bridge, where the canal cuts across the October Railway, and the bridge of the eighth lock at the Kalinin Railway are particularly important achievements of Soviet technique. The former is the first of its kind in the Soviet Union. The other bridge at the eighth lock is the largest in the U.S.S.R. for its span and one of the largest in the world.

Not far from the latter bridge a tunnel was built under the Volokolamsk Chausee and under the canal, since the construction of a bridge across this section of the canal was found technically and economically disadvantageous. Considerable difficulties had to be overcome in building it and the reinforced concrete work had to be strong enough to withstand the huge pressure of the canal. The tunnel, 150 metres long, is equipped along modern lines, and is provided with plenty of ventilation. Its walls are covered with polished stone and red granite and marble, and it has 194 lighting fixtures.

The Moscow-Volga Canal is the second stage in the plan for the inter-connection of the Soviet seas with the inland waterways of the country. The first was the White Sea-Baltic Canal which

enabled ships to travel from Leningrad to the White Sea without entering foreign waters. This reconstruction of the inland waterways is calculated to form an organized unified inter-connected freight and passenger traffic system which will relieve the railways of some of their burdens and make for the comfort and efficiency of transport generally.

It is a great step forward in making Moscow a port of the five seas—the Caspian, Black, Azov, Baltic, and White Seas. By means of the White Sea-Baltic Canal and the new Moscow-Volga Canal, Moscow is now connected with the Baltic, White, and Caspian Seas, and after the construction of the Volga-Don Canal, work on which is now in progress, it will also be connected with the Azov and Black Seas.

Another important object of the building of the Moscow-Volga Canal is the increase in the water supply to Moscow, the supply per head of the population of which had increased to 210 litres per head at the beginning of 1938.

Finally, one more important aspect of these constructions must be noted, and that is that side by side with Soviet engineers, technicians, and voluntary workers, huge numbers of prisoners assisted in the construction of the canal. In reckoning up the significance of the latter no little credit must be given to the fact that, as on the White Sea-Baltic Canal so on the Moscow-Volga Canal, thousands of former criminals have been, as the Russians put it, “reforged,” have learnt the meaning of honest toil, have learnt new trades, and have been trained to become useful, honourable members of society. This it may be added is the general aim underlying the whole treatment of criminals in the U.S.S.R.

Some 55,000 former criminals, many of whom have worked on the canal with a Stakhanov-like *tempo* of labour, have been pardoned and are now assured of profitable employment. Their criminal records have been expunged and they have become useful members of society. A large number of the other workers have received valuable rewards and various orders of merit for their arduous, excellent work on the canal.

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Soviet aviation is justly well-known. It can boast many a remarkable feat—the rescue of foreign aviators such as Nobile and Mattern, the rescue of the Chelyuskinites marooned on an Arctic ice floe in 1934, the daring flight to the North Pole in order to establish a scientific station there, and the equally daring flights to the U.S.A. via the North Pole, have seized the imagination of the whole world.

The U.S.S.R. has thousands of intrepid airmen, and its youth, both men and women, are decidedly air-minded. Parachute jumping has become one of the most popular of Soviet sports.

The first foreign air line was organized in 1922 between Moscow and Koenigsberg; later this line was extended to Berlin. The first inland line was established in 1923 between Moscow-Nizhni-Novgorod (now Gorki)-Kazan; the total of air line then was 1,666 kilometres and the freight carried was 0.1 ton, whilst the mail was 1.8 tons. Since then, and particularly during the last ten years, there has been a very rapid development of civil aviation, until in 1936 the length of the Soviet air lines was 108,731 kilometres, the freight carried was 35,088 tons and the mail 7,931 tons.

The three principal air lines of the Soviet Union are the Eastern or Trans-Siberian line, connecting Moscow with Vladivostok, and the two southern lines, Moscow-Tiflis and Moscow-Tashkent.

The Moscow-Vladivostok line is more than 8,000 kilometres long. It is of international importance, as it links up the Atlantic with the Pacific Ocean through the Moscow-Prague air service.

The U.S.S.R. is, of course, connected by air with various countries. It is now possible to go direct by air from Moscow to London, for instance; the most recent air lines established are the Moscow-Prague and the Moscow-Stockholm lines.

Up to 1927, the U.S.S.R. imported all the necessary aviation equipment, but since then the Soviet authorities have built up an excellent aviation industry; not only ordinary passenger and freight planes, but the planes in which Soviet airmen have made their most daring flights in the Arctic and to the U.S.A. were

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constructed and entirely equipped by Soviet workers in Soviet works from Soviet materials.

The use of aviation in agriculture was continued and extended. Forests, fisheries, and hunting-grounds have been photographed from the air and aeroplane patrols are used for dealing with forest fires. Millions of hectares of cotton, wheat, and sugar-beets have been treated with insecticides from the air. The breeding places of locusts have been destroyed and entire regions have been freed from the menace of malaria by the spraying of swamps with larva-destroying chemicals from aeroplanes.

Aeroplanes are also being used in experiments for the production of artificial rain, dispersal of clouds, etc.

Although, as we have shown, the aim to industrialize the U.S.S.R. has been attained during the twenty years of the existence of the Soviet Government, agriculture has by no means been neglected; indeed it may be that the verdict of history will be that it is in the solution of the agricultural question that the U.S.S.R. has made the greatest and most original contribution to world economic history.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, during the course of the First Five-Year Plan over 61.2 per cent of the total poor and middle peasant farms had joined together to form over 211,000 collective farms embracing over 14,700,000 former individual peasant farms, and these cultivated 75.6 per cent of the total area sown by the peasantry.

Socialist agriculture generally (i.e. the Kolkhozy and Sovkhozy) in 1932 produced 84.2 per cent of the marketable grain and 83 per cent of the cotton. The Second Five-Year Plan brought about an extension of collectivization. By April 1937 there were 243,700 collective farms embracing 18,500,000 peasant farms, 93 per cent of all the former individual peasant farms having joined collectives, and of the area cultivated in 1937, only 0.9 per cent was sown by individual peasants.

The mechanization of agriculture proceeded apace. There were in 1937 some 5,617 machine tractor stations and these supplied

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the Kolkhozy with the necessary tractors, combines, seed-drillers, digging and threshing machines, motors and other complicated machinery, so that all agricultural processes—ploughing, sowing, reaping, and transport of the harvest—had, by 1937, been largely mechanized. Over 90 per cent of the sown area of the Kolkhozy is served by the machine tractor stations.

The Second Five-Year Plan indeed has been overfulfilled in regard to the supply of tractor power to agriculture. By the middle of 1937, the total power of the tractor parks in the possession of the Sovkhozy and the machine tractor stations already exceeded 8,200,000 horse power, which was the figure laid down in the Second Five-Year Plan. Similarly, the number of combines at work on the Sovkhoz and Kolkhoz fields was 121,000 as compared with 100,000 laid down in the Five-Year Plan for the end of 1937.

About 42·5 per cent of the total sown area under grain has been harvested by combines in 1937 as compared with 2·3 per cent in 1934 and 24 per cent in 1936.

The progress in the mechanization of agriculture during the twenty years under review was such as was only achieved in other countries in nearly one hundred years. The value of the simple agricultural machines and implements employed on a hectare of sown land in the peasant farms of Tsarist Russia amounted to six roubles (at 1926-27 prices); there were practically no tractors, combines, or lorries. In the U.S.S.R., in 1936, the average value of agricultural machines and implements to a hectare of sown land was twenty roubles. In addition, the value of combines amounted to five roubles, of tractors to 15 roubles, and of motor lorries to six roubles per hectare.

Before the Revolution the main agricultural implements used by the peasantry were, as already mentioned, the scythe and sickle, wooden and iron ploughs and wooden harrows. Some 30 per cent of peasant farms possessed no horses, 34 per cent had practically no agricultural implements of their own.

All this has been changed. The Kolkhozy now have at their

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disposal the latest agricultural machinery and equipment, as well as expert advice supplied to them by the machine tractor stations organized by the Government for their assistance.

At the same time the Commissariats for Agriculture and for the State farms have organized courses for the training of tractor and combine operators, and between January 1934 and August 1937, 1,195,357 have been trained in these courses as tractor instructors, 139,402 as combine operators, and 84,502 as drivers.

In pre-war Russia there were some 367,200,000 hectares of agricultural land, of which 152,500,000 hectares belonged to a comparatively small handful of people—the Tsarist family, the landed estate owners, and the Church—and 80,000,000 hectares to kulaks who constituted 15 per cent of the peasant households in the villages. The poor peasant farmers, constituting 65 per cent of the households and the middle farmers 20 per cent, thus had between them 134,700,000 hectares or only some 34 per cent of the agricultural land.

According to the latest returns (May 1, 1937), the agricultural land of the country has been increased (by the application of amelioration measures, etc., to land not formerly classed as agricultural) to 421,900,000 hectares, of which the Kolkhozy and small individual peasant farmers now have at their disposal 370,800,000 hectares and the Sovkhozy 51,100,000 hectares. The whole of the land now, of course, belongs to the State, but the Kolkhozy have charters for the perpetual use of their land so long as they cultivate it in the approved manner.

The rapidity with which new methods are applied in Soviet agriculture can be illustrated by the example of the agronomist T. Lysenko. In 1930-31, when he was practically unknown, he first proposed the application of vernalization to grain seeds. In 1932, the Kolkhozy sowed 42,000 hectares with vernalized seeds; in 1934 they sowed 600,000 hectares; in 1935, 2,100,000 hectares; in 1936 nearly 7,100,000 hectares, and in 1937 nearly 8,870,000 hectares. This is but one example of many that might be cited

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of the way in which every new practicable discovery or invention is adopted by a peasantry which some twenty years ago was notorious for its backwardness and lack of culture.

It is this use of machinery, the application of science, and the growing Socialist consciousness and culture of the peasant masses which has produced such excellent results in 1937, in spite of by no means exceptionally favourable meteorological conditions and the wrecking attempts by a few traitors here and there. In good pre-war years the yield of the grain harvest was from 4 to 5 milliard poods, but the yield in 1937 was about 6·8 milliard poods.

The increase in yield of the industrial plants has been even more marked. Thus in 1936 the yield of raw cotton was 23,900,000 centners as compared with 7,400,000 centners in 1913. The U.S.S.R. now takes first place in Europe and third in the world in regard to output of cotton, and the Soviet cotton industry now uses exclusively Soviet raw cotton, whereas in 1913 Russia imported 6,400,000 centners of raw cotton. Similarly, the yield of flax fibre in the U.S.S.R. in 1936 was 5,300,000 centners as compared with 3,300,000 centners in 1913, and the yield of sugar-beet was 206,400,000 centners in 1937 and 109,000,000 centners in 1913. The U.S.S.R. now takes first place in the world in the production of flax and sugar-beet.

The Stakhanovites of agriculture in some cases have even established world records; for instance, the Soviet Press of December 3, 1937, reported that in 1929 a record harvest of sugar-beet was gathered by a farmer, Mr. Holmes, in California, when he obtained 948 centners of sugar-beet per hectare on an area of 22 hectares. But this record was beaten in 1936 by the Stakhanovites E. Sidoruk of the "Twelve Years of October" Kolkhoz (Vinnitsa Province) and Otorbaeva of the "Third International" Kolkhoz (Kirghiz), who obtained 1,170 to 1,196 centners per hectare, whilst S. Uttenbergenov from the Lenin Kolkhoz in Kazakhstan obtained 1,410 centners per hectare. In 1937 Otorbaeva and her field section obtained 1,800 centners per hectare.

Again, as regards cotton, up to 1934 the world record harvest

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was held by the U.S.A., where 47 centners of cotton per hectare had been raised. This record has been nearly trebled by Soviet cotton growers. In the Stalin Kolkhoz (Uzbekistan), Madrakhin Babarakhinov and his field section obtained in 1937 some 136 centners of cotton per hectare, whilst 100 centners per hectare has been obtained by scores of Soviet cotton growers.

Valued at 1926-27 prices in each case, the produce of agricultural output in 1937 was 83 per cent above the value of the pre-war output; the value of the total output of grain and other land produce in 1913 was 8·0 milliard roubles. In 1935 the value had risen to 11·9 milliard roubles, and in 1937, according to preliminary returns, to 16·6 milliard roubles. The value of the output of animal produce was 4·6 milliard roubles in 1913, 3·9 milliard roubles in 1935, and 6·4 milliard roubles in 1937.

Along the shores of the Black Sea in the Caucasus and in the Crimea, in Azerbaijan, Turkestan, and Tadzhikistan, thousands of acres with sub-tropical plants, citrus fruits, tea, olives, and figs are being cultivated. Oranges, tangerines and lemons are being produced in vast quantities. Formerly a total of 375 acres was planted with citrus fruits; now, in the Georgian Republic alone 16,000 acres are planted, and the Georgian State and collective farms supply over five million seedlings a year and promise well to fulfil Georgia's plan to increase the acreage to 56,000 acres by 1940. In the western district of the Republic 25,000 acres have been planted with tung trees which yield a valuable oil that is used for the prevention of metal corrosion.

Georgia has become the main tea-growing district of the Soviet Union. Originally the area under this crop covered 2,557 acres, now there are 108,700 acres. Over the U.S.S.R. as a whole, tea plantation in 1937 extended over an area of about 112,000 acres. By October 1, 1937, Georgia alone gathered 25,000 tons of high quality green tea leaves. Tea is now also being cultivated in Azerbaijan. In the latter republic a number of new areas are being developed by land reclamation, irrigation and draining for the cultivation of a number of sub-tropical plants.

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In Turkmenistan and Tadzhikistan, fig, pomegranate, walnut and pistachio nut trees are grown, while olives, almonds, rubber, and essential oil-bearing trees are also successfully cultivated. On the slopes of southern Crimea lavender and other shrubs and flowers have been planted, while Georgia is growing geraniums on a large scale for oil extraction purposes.

The Kok-Sagysa plant, which was discovered in Tyan-Shanya in 1931, is now cultivated in various parts of the U.S.S.R. (including the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, White Russia, the Moscow Province, etc.), and has been found to yield excellent natural rubber in no way inferior to that of British India and Borneo.

The Far North, too, has received consideration, and great work has been carried out in the organization of marine and air transport to, and the economic development of, the Far North.

The study of the Far North on a large scale with a view to investigating its resources and developing its economy, started in 1921, when the Institute for the Study of the Far North was set up under the Supreme Economic Council; later this institute was transformed into an All-Union Arctic Institute under the guidance of Professor Samoilovich.

In 1932 the Northern Sea Route Committee was established with O. Y. Schmidt at its head. This committee organized food and timber expeditions to the Far North and the construction of Arctic cities. It also carried out much exploratory work on a well-organized scientific plan within the framework of the First Five-Year Plan and set up a number of Arctic stations, etc.

In 1932, with the completion of the First Five-Year Plan, the Northern Sea Route Committee proposed and successfully carried out an expedition (again under the leadership of O. Y. Schmidt) in the Sibiriakov over the North Sea route in one navigation season. Later, the Northern Sea route Committee was reorganized as the Central Administration of the Northern Sea Route, which was entrusted both with the transport to, and economic and cultural development of, all the territory lying north of 62° parallel, i.e. about a quarter of the total territory of the U.S.S.R.—no mean

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task, in view of the facts that some of the races are nomadic, great distances separate the sparsely populated areas, etc.

A number of daring voyages were made to the Arctic, among them the celebrated Chelyuskin expedition which was caught and crushed by the ice. The crew, it will be recalled, set up a camp on an ice floe and was later rescued by intrepid Soviet aviators.

In 1936, 160 Soviet vessels sailed in the Arctic, 14 of these ships covering the whole northern sea route (from west to east or east to west) in one navigation season. Plying the Arctic waters, Soviet ships transport hundreds of thousands of tons of industrial goods and equipment to various points in the Far North.

Considerable cargoes are also conveyed to the various Arctic stations by Soviet air lines.

The Far North is populated by a fair number of Russians and also by native northern races, the Nentzy, Yakuts, and numerous other nationalities. In accordance with the general national policy of the Soviet Government, much has been done for the economic and cultural development of these nationalities.

It may be pointed out that the Far North is not only rich in furs, such as silver, white and blue fox, seal, sables, etc., but, contrary to what is generally imagined, it is also rich in valuable mineral deposits, and some 80 per cent of the territory comprised in the Far North is wooded. Agriculture, too, has been developed in these areas. The natives in these regions have been encouraged to form collective farms and have been helped to grow crops which had hitherto never been cultivated in these latitudes.

At a conference of scientists and workers at agricultural experimental stations held at the Lenin Academy of Agricultural Science, December 1936, it was reported that Professor I. G. Eichfeld and his scientific associates had succeeded in growing new varieties of vegetable and grain crops beyond the Arctic circle, where nothing had hitherto ever been cultivated.

In overcoming the great difficulties in growing vegetables in the Arctic, Eichfeld at first worked on a theory advanced by the American Allard, but with no success. He then resorted to the

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theory of Professor T. D. Lysenko on the development of plants by stages and soon succeeded in reproducing varieties of vegetables which gave excellent yields. The "Industriya" State Farm in the Arctic, for example, was not only able to meet the local demand for cauliflower, but even exported a considerable quantity to Leningrad.

The Central Northern Sea Route Administration has now started the organization of machine-tractor stations in the extreme North with a view to assisting the local collective farms to develop their economy. Each station is to have at its disposal twelve tractors and a full set of agricultural machines, a motor trawler flotilla with mechanized equipment, repairing shops for agricultural implements and hunters' rifles, laboratories, and a radio transmitter.

The first two stations have already been opened. One of them, in the Ostyako-Vogul national area, serves a district of more than ten million acres along the Ob River. Of these about 1,250,000 acres are grassland, of which only 5 per cent has been utilized so far.

Similar stations are being organized along the rivers Lena and Indygirka, in Yakutia and in Providence Bay, in the Far North.

In 1936 about 50 per cent of the children in these areas attended schools, all conducted in their native tongues—in some areas indeed practically every child attends school. The work of building new schools is going forward as rapidly as possible, and it is hoped to have every child in the Far North at school by 1938-39. At the same time the school is being made a centre for the spread of culture and more civilized modes of life among the adult population; the natives are now beginning to take quite kindly to baths, the toothbrush, soap, etc. Hospitals and medical stations are also being established, and Professor Schmidt expressed his great joy when, on visiting the Lavrentiev cultural base in the Chukotsk Peninsula, he found that the whole junior medical staff of the local model hospital consisted of local women, Chukchans and Eskimos, who had been excellently trained in this local hospital.

Professor Schmidt also relates that in the Lower Obi area three

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hundred and forty-eight members of families of various northern nationalities occupy important official positions. Many members of the northern nationalities have been trained and have mastered such professions as radio operators, accountants, chauffeurs, veterinary surgeons, directors of fur stations, and of banking groups. Natives are also being trained in Central Soviet colleges and academies for leading positions in Soviet political, economic, and cultural institutions.

It is interesting to note that the new Soviet Constitution was translated into the languages of the natives of the Far North, and was discussed by these natives no less deeply and enthusiastically than in other parts of the U.S.S.R.

The chief industry in the Far North is, of course, hunting—particularly for valuable furs, and collections of the latter are increasing year by year. Next comes deer raising—for which Sovkhozy and Kolkhozy have been formed. The earnings of the hunters and Kolkhozniks generally are at the same time rising rapidly, and with it their standard of life. Many of the natives have built or are building for themselves dwellings of a European type and are purchasing furniture, crockery, town clothes (silk materials), musical instruments, books of various kinds, sporting equipment, etc.

Indeed, the demand is as yet greater than the supply. Said one worker at a deer-raising Sovkhozy: "We have learnt to wear and wash our underlinen, but unfortunately we have nowhere to keep our clean linen—since we are unable to buy chests of drawers." Such a remark by an ordinary native throws a more vivid light on the changes taking place in their lives than columns of formal figures. This was said in 1936; since then retail trade in the Far North has been extended considerably, and we may hope that the Sovkhoz worker and others now have sufficient accommodation to store their clean linen.

During 1937 a start was also made in replacing the primitive hearths, with a hole in the roof of the peasant huts to let out the smoke, by proper movable iron ovens. Some ovens have been

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imported ready made; at the same time in a number of districts iron has been imported and ovens are being manufactured on the spot by artels of native workers. What a revolution this will bring about in the lives of the natives can be imagined!

Local river transport is also being developed, particularly for the purpose of forwarding goods of prime necessity.

In the course of an interview, Professor Schmidt gave the following figures to illustrate the development of trade in the Far North: cargo carried by marine transport to the Far North in 1933 amounted to 120,000 tons, including transport on the Kara Sea. In 1936, the total cargo transported was 276,000 tons, and it is estimated that in 1937 some 351,800 tons of goods have been forwarded to the Far North.

The local river transport has increased from 60,000 tons in 1933 to 160,000 tons in 1936, whilst it is expected to have reached 240,000 tons in 1937. The year 1937 was particularly fruitful in great air expeditions to the Far North. Some of these have been reported the whole world over, but there have been many more flights to the Far North taking passengers and goods to the most outlying parts, of which the outside world has heard but little. Air transport and the development of science in the Far North, the study of the local flora and fauna, metereological conditions, the natural mineral and other resources of the Far North—all this is part of the plan of the Central Northern Sea-Route Administration.

The great economic activity during the two Five-Year Plans described in this and the preceding chapter is reflected financially first of all in the growth of the national income. In 1913 this amounted (in 1926–27 prices throughout) to 21·0 milliard roubles; in 1925 it fell to 16·8 milliard roubles, but by 1929 it had risen to 28·9 milliard roubles, and by 1936 to 86·0 milliard roubles. In 1937 it was 100 milliard roubles.

Secondly, by the growth of the home trade. The latter (including State, co-operative, and Kolkhoz sales) amounted in 1932 to 47·8 milliard roubles. It mounted steadily year by year until

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in 1937 it reached 142.8 milliard roubles. It will be noted that no figure is given for private trade since, as Stalin said in his speech at the Soviet Congress of 1936: "As for the home trade, merchants and speculators have been driven out entirely therefrom. The whole trade turnover is now in the hands of the State, the Co-operatives, and Kolkhozy. A new Soviet trade has arisen and developed—a trade without speculators and without capitalists."

At the same time goods have become more accessible to the masses, both in the towns and villages. Thus, whilst at the end of 1924 there were 22,000 shops and trading kiosks in the urban areas of the U.S.S.R. and 20,000 in the rural areas, by 1936 the number in the urban areas was 121,000 and in the rural areas 169,000.

Particularly since 1935, in accordance with the policy of raising the standard of life of the masses of the peasantry, retail trade in the rural areas has increased relatively more rapidly than in the urban areas. Thus, whilst in the latter retail trade in 1937 was 49 per cent above that in 1935, in the rural areas in 1937 it was 71 per cent above that in 1935.

During the Second Five-Year Plan the quantity of sugar sold in the village co-operative shops increased 7 times; of confectionary over 17 times; household soap over 4 times; toilet soap and perfumes 3 times; furniture 13 times, and so on. Bicycles, gramophones, pianos, etc., were in great demand in the villages in 1936 and 1937. The supply, greatly in excess though it was as compared with previous years, was insufficient to satisfy the demand for all such goods.

We shall deal with the progress of education in a subsequent chapter on the intelligentsia, but a few words may be said in regard to the development of the health services.

The relative importance which the Soviet Government and the Tsarist Government attached to the health of the people may be gauged by the fact that whereas the Soviet Government, in 1936, spent nearly 40 roubles per head of the population on the health

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services, the Tsarist Government only spent 90 kopeks per head on these services.

The total expenditure on the health services during the Second Five-Year Plan (1933-37) was estimated to amount to 19·6 milliard roubles, but in view of the raising of the salaries of medical and health workers in 1935 and additional expenditure in 1936 and 1937 on new maternity homes and crèches, the expenditure on the health services during the five years will have amounted to 26·3 milliard roubles.

How has this expenditure affected the wellbeing of the people?

The hospitals existing in Russia at the time of the Revolution were, for the most part, out of date and were incapable, and indeed did not seek, to provide adequate medical aid for the masses of the people. Since the Soviets have been in power, the old hospitals have been reconditioned and modernized and numerous new hospitals, equipped on the latest lines, have been constructed. Since 1932 the number of beds in hospitals administered by the Health Commissariat has increased as follows:

	Urban.	Rural.
1932	249,000	107,000
1937	371,000	158,000

The number of hospitals in urban areas has increased from 1,230 on January 1, 1914 (in the area now covered by the U.S.S.R.), to 9,496 by January 1, 1936, whilst the capacity for the treatment of cases has increased more than nine times.

In the rural areas the number of first aid stations and polyclinics was 4,367 on January 1, 1914, and 15,818 on January 1, 1936, whilst the number of cases treated increased by 221 per cent.

Both in the case of the urban and rural areas the increase in accommodation has been particularly marked in the hitherto more backward areas, such as Armenia, Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan, Kirghiz, etc.

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The number of doctors practising in the U.S.S.R. has increased from 19,785 in 1913 to 90,692 in 1936, whilst in 1937 there were over 100,000. (These figures refer to present territory.)

Emergency ambulance services have been organized in the smaller towns in connection with the hospitals and in the larger towns as special emergency centres. The total number of these centres has increased from 154 on January 1, 1931, to 468 in 1937. They not only provide ambulances in emergency cases, but where necessary render immediate aid, arrange for immediate operations, transfusions, etc. During recent years aviation has also participated in the emergency services.

Great efforts have been made to stamp out venereal diseases—a scourge of pre-war Russia. At the present time there are twenty-two institutes for the study of venereal diseases and a number of dispensaries and hospitals for treatment have been organized, but with the stamping out of prostitution the number of treatment centres is decreasing. In some of the formerly worst areas in this respect the number of cases of syphilis has decreased by over 57 per cent and infectious forms of syphilis by 87 per cent during the ten years 1926-36. In Moscow the number of syphilis cases registered has fallen from 334 in 1913 to 174 in 1926 and to 56 in 1936. At the same time registration is much more efficient now than it was in pre-war days.

In Tsarist days there was but one malaria treatment centre and this was closed down during the world war. The Soviet Government took the matter in hand seriously when in 1920, in spite of the still raging civil war and intervention, they organized the State Tropical Institute in Moscow. In subsequent years similar institutes were organized in Kharkov, Baku, Tiflis, Erivan, Sukhum, Stalinabad, and other towns. At the same time they organized a number of malaria treatment stations and by 1932 there were 200 such stations. Now, however, there are a total of 2,490 malaria treatment centres and stations. In all there are over 4,000 beds reserved for more serious malaria cases. Large-scale production of anti-malaria preparations has been organized and it is confidently

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expected that by the end of 1938 the manufacture of these medicaments will fully cover the demand.

At the present time there are 3,650 röntgen ray appliances in use as against 200 to 300 in 1914.

A close study is being made of tuberculosis and some 5,000 doctors and over 500 scientific research workers are studying the ways and means of stamping out tuberculosis. In 1914, there were only 43 dispensaries and centres for treatment of tubercular patients. These were all in urban areas; there were practically none in the rural areas. Now there are 583 such centres in urban areas and 65 in rural areas.

During 1937 there have been no cases of intermittent typhoid or smallpox in the Ukraine. Cases of scarlet fever were 32 per cent less than in 1936 and the number of diphtheria cases was the lowest in the last forty years.

Among those called to the army in Tsarist Russia, 50 to 100 of every 1,000 suffered from some form of tuberculosis, but in 1935 the number rejected as unfit for service in the Red Army owing to their being tubercular was only one-tenth to one-twentieth of that in 1914, in spite of the fact that the standard of fitness demanded by the Red Army authorities is far higher than that demanded by the Tsarist authorities.

We deal with the question of maternity and infant welfare work in another chapter.

Tsarist Russia could not boast of being first in Europe in industry, agriculture, literacy, etc., but as already mentioned there was one branch in which she really did take first place—she had the highest death-rate in Europe and one of the highest in the world.

According to Dr. Clara Segal “the principal cities and towns of the U.S.S.R. show at present a lower death-rate than some foreign capitals. In 1935, for instance, the mortality-rate per 1,000 inhabitants in Moscow was 11.6, Leningrad 11.3, Kiev 12.9, Minsk 10.3, and Tiflis, 10.7, while Berlin had a death-rate of 20.1, Bucharest 16.7, Tokyo 13.5, Paris 12.2, and London 12.2.”¹

¹ *The Financial Times*, U.S.S.R. Supplement, November 8, 1937.

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There are some 347 medical research institutions, 50 of which are devoted to a study of sanitation and bacteriology, 11 to tropical conditions, 24 to tuberculosis, 22 to mother and infant welfare, 28 to labour hygiene, and 21 to venereal diseases. Basic theoretical medical problems are worked out in the All-Union Institute of Experimental Medicine in Moscow, which is excellently equipped to deal with all modern problems of disease and their treatment.

Finally, one word in regard to the international position of the U.S.S.R. In another book we hope to discuss this question fully. Suffice it to say here that during the last ten years the U.S.S.R. has become one of the most important and influential world Powers, and only a very few, what might be called die-hard small Powers, still pretend that the U.S.S.R. does not exist by failing to recognize her *de jure*. This fact hardly causes the Soviet leaders loss of much sleep.

The foreign policy of the U.S.S.R. is based to-day, as it has always been, on furthering the maintenance of world peace. With this aim in view, M. Litvinov, Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, repeatedly proposed total or (when that was rejected) at least partial but real disarmament. In order to help the forces that made for peace, the Soviet Government in 1934 joined the League of Nations. From time to time the U.S.S.R. concluded numerous non-aggression Pacts and later Pacts for mutual assistance, at the same time she proposed a definition of an aggressor which, if generally adopted and acted upon, would put a very speedy end to aggression. As M. Maisky, Soviet Ambassador in London, so well expressed it: "Even the most captious critic could not quote a single act of foreign aggression committed by the Soviet Union in the course of these twenty years; not a single example of propaganda, or incitement to such an aggression. On the contrary, the Soviet Union has become the standard-bearer of just and universal peace. She voluntarily scrapped all the unequal treaties concluded between Tsarist Russia and Eastern countries. She tried to establish the best possible relations—political and economic—with all the nations of the world, and she has

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actually succeeded in this task with those States who harbour no aggressive designs and are genuinely attached to the upholding of peace."¹

During the whole twenty years, or at any rate since the cessation of intervention in 1922 and particularly since 1932 (after the completion of the First Five-Year Plan), the U.S.S.R. has been an increasingly powerful factor in the preservation of world peace. This not only by her participation on the side of peace in all world conferences, etc., but also because of her developing industries and her mighty defensive forces. Who can doubt that were the U.S.S.R. weak industrially and were she not prepared militarily to give as good, and better, to any who might attack her, Fascism in the East and West would long ago have attacked her and thus brought about a general conflagration.

¹ At a dinner in London, November 24, 1937.

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THE foregoing chapters have given a few—and only a few—of the more salient economic achievements of the U.S.S.R. during the twenty years of the existence of the Soviets. The question now arises, what have the masses of the people gained from it all? What has this economic progress meant in terms of the standard of life, the well-being, the culture of the workers and peasants, of the ordinary rank and file men, women, and children?

In this and succeeding chapters we shall give a number of extracts from speeches, letters, and articles, by industrial workers, peasants, scientists, authors, artists, etc. These have practically all been culled from the Soviet Press. In making our choice of the large quantity of material at our disposal, we have been careful to give such examples from the life of workers and peasants as we know from our own observations and studies to be characteristic of thousands, indeed, tens and hundreds of thousands of similar cases?

In other countries, too, cases may be cited of men and women from the humblest of homes and the most hopeless positions rising above their circumstances and reaching leading positions in the State or the world of science or literature. What, however, distinguishes such cases in other countries from those in the U.S.S.R. is the fact that whilst in the former they are exceptional and comparatively few and far between, in the U.S.S.R. they are almost the rule. Every Soviet child has an absolutely equal opportunity of developing its talent in whatever sphere it may manifest itself. The children of say, Stalin, Litvinov, Molotov, or other leaders are no more privileged in the attainment of education and in advancement to leading positions in the State, science, literature, or the theatre, etc., than those of manual workers or peasants. In so far as educational opportunities are still to some extent limited

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(in the more outlying villages) it is only a matter of time when this too will be rectified, i.e. when the growing might of the national economy makes it possible to provide sufficient educational facilities throughout the country. That is why the examples we cite are of real significance in regard to the U.S.S.R., whereas an example here and there from other countries would mean little. For every talented child of the poor in the capitalist countries who manages to overcome unfavourable circumstances, there are thousands whose talents and ambitions are crushed by the ruthless economic system. As regards our quotations from the writings or speeches of scientists, authors, etc., we have as far as possible chosen such as are well-known, whose own works bear witness to their contentions and who could not be suspected to have spoken as they did merely to curry favour with the authorities.

What have the workers gained as a result of twenty years of the Soviet regime?

In an earlier chapter we have seen what their conditions of life were in pre-war Russia; we scarcely need to make any detailed comparisons here, but only to state the present position.

First and foremost, of course, is the fact that from a down-trodden poverty-stricken class with few political or economic rights, entirely dependent for their livelihood on the factory and landowners and Government officials, they have become a governing class, or, since there is no class beneath them which they "govern," it would be better to say they have become the self-governing masters of their country. They have ceased to be an enslaved proletariat and have become free workers in the works and factories which they now own collectively. This new position of which--as five minutes' talk with almost any average, intelligent rank-and-file Soviet worker will convince any unbiased observer --the workers are fully conscious, is in itself a tremendous gain. Even when, as in the case of many, but a diminishing number of unskilled workers, their life is still hard, the consciousness of their part ownership of the country, of the fact that all roads to advancement, every field of activity, is open to them and their

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children on an equality with every one else in the land—this consciousness is of tremendous importance—whatever hardships they have had to bear in the past twenty years or still have to bear, they have, and justly have, hope in the future for themselves and their children.

Of the immediate material gains, perhaps the greatest is the complete stamping out of unemployment since 1931. In 1928, with a total of 11,600,000 manual and non-manual workers in employment, there were still 1,576,000 unemployed. In 1936, the total in employment had risen to nearly 26,000,000 and there were no unemployed. What this means to the worker and his family perhaps only those who are in daily or weekly fear of being thrown out of work can appreciate to the full.

Adult workers have a seven-hour working day for all ordinary classes of work, but underground workers in the mines, metal smelters, and generally workers in the heavier and more injurious trades have a six-hour day.

About 80 per cent of the workers have a rest day after every five days' work. The other 20 per cent employed in the injurious and more heavy trades, such as the chemical and the foundry and smelting plants, have one rest day after every four days' work.

No child under fourteen may be gainfully employed; juveniles between the ages of fourteen and sixteen years may only be employed in exceptional cases, and only with the consent of the competent trade union.

The hours of work of juveniles between fourteen and sixteen years of age is fixed at a maximum of four hours a day, and between the ages of sixteen and eighteen at six hours per day without loss of pay, i.e. a juvenile working four or six hours per day will get the same as an adult doing similar work for seven hours a day.

Juveniles from fourteen years of age may be admitted to the factory workshop schools where there is a six-hour day—three hours being devoted to study and three hours to practical work in the school workshops. The pupils at these schools receive a maintenance grant of 40 to 150 roubles per month. Like all juvenile

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workers, they have a month's summer holiday without loss of their grant.

Overtime is only permitted in exceptional cases, such as an accident at the works; but whatever the circumstances the number of hours worked during the year as overtime by any one worker must never exceed one hundred and twenty hours, and may not exceed four hours in any two consecutive days.

No overtime may be imposed by the management of a works without the previous permission of the competent trade union. In all cases the personal consent of the worker who is asked to do overtime must be obtained.

The first two hours of overtime are paid for at time and a half rates and all subsequent hours of overtime are paid at double ordinary rates. Workers on night duty are paid at higher rates than on day duty. Where the three-shift system is worked, the workers take their turn at night duty.

No overtime is permitted to be done by juveniles up to the age of eighteen or by pregnant women or nursing mothers. Juveniles and pregnant women are also not permitted to do night duty.

In general, although women are permitted and indeed encouraged to take up any and every class of work, they are prohibited from engaging in the heaviest and most injurious trades, such as metal smelting, chlorine works, etc.

All workers in the U.S.S.R. have a minimum statutory summer holiday ranging from two to four weeks, as well as five other free days (revolutionary holidays) during the year. All holidays are paid at the normal rates of wages. Wages have increased steadily from an average annual wage of 703 roubles in 1928 to 2,776 in 1936. In 1937 there was a rise of 7 to 8 per cent, and in 1938 a further rise in wages by about 8-10 per cent.

Thus the average monetary wages during the First and Second Five-Year Plans have increased more than 3·5 times. The greatest rise has been in the wages of miners, metal, oil and machine construction workers, and the wages of Stakhanovites in these and other industries have risen considerably above the average.

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In view of the fact that there is no unemployment in the U.S.S.R., and that women are encouraged to enter trades and professions of all kinds—facilities for the care of children are being constantly expanded—the actual income of a worker's family is considerably in excess of that indicated by the wage figures shown above.

The average monthly income per head of a worker's family in 1930 was 37·51 roubles. Since then there has been a constant rise year by year until in 1936 the average monthly income per head was 140 roubles. Thus a family of, say, five, would have, on the average, 700 roubles per month. Of course, the income of families in which one or more workers are Stakhanovites would be considerably above this figure; on the other hand, the income of families of unskilled workers would be below it, but the number of unskilled workers, especially among the younger people, is getting steadily less.

But the cash wages alone do not give a fair picture, since it is estimated that the value of the social insurance services to which the workers do not contribute add over 34 per cent to these wages.

The social insurance funds are administered solely by the trade unions, and the services rendered include holidays free of charge at rest homes and sanatoria; maintenance of and provision of clubs, crèches, and kindergartens; allowances for incapacitation; full pay for women during their leave of absence from work eight weeks before and eight weeks after child-birth, allowance for a layette and the feeding of the new-born infant; loans to workers in case of special need, etc.

During the four years of the First Five-Year Plan (October 1, 1928-32), 10,083,000,000 roubles were spent for these purposes by the social insurance funds, whilst during the four years of the Second Five-Year Plan (1933-36), 26,462,200,000 roubles were so spent. The Soviet worker now not only has a feeling of security in regard to his work whilst still young and healthy, but also in regard to his old age (old age pensions are given to men at 65 after 25 years' service and to women at 55 after 20 years' service) and when temporarily or permanently incapacitated, in which case

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he receives a sufficient pension—a thing almost unheard of so far as wage workers were concerned in Tsarist Russia.

The number of places in the sanatoria and rest homes is not yet sufficient for all workers, but it is increasing from year to year. Nearly 2,000,000 workers enjoyed a holiday free of charge in the rest homes of the U.S.S.R. in 1936, and about a further 1,000,000 went at their own expense but at a low charge. Those going free of charge also have free travel to and from the rest homes and their own homes. Nearly 1,000,000 workers (about half of these completely free of charge) spent a month or more at sanatoria in various health resorts and country districts. In addition, just outside many towns, one-day rest homes situated in country districts with good grounds, have been formed in which workers can spend their weekly free day, free of charge, healthily and pleasantly. Games and entertainments, libraries, and lectures are organized in these homes. Nearly 1,200,000 workers utilized these one-day rest homes in 1936.

Thus the workers now have the right not only to work, but also to leisure—rights which for the first time in human history are guaranteed to all men and women in the U.S.S.R. by their latest constitution (adopted December 5, 1936); and these rights are not merely paper rights, but are assured to them by practical measures and by the whole Socialist structure of Soviet society.

Side by side with increasing wages, the prices of nearly all goods used by the average household have been reduced during the last few years. For instance, such reductions in State and co-operative retail shops were made by decrees several times during 1937. In addition, the Soviet worker also purchases much of his foodstuffs in the kolkhoz markets, i.e. in the markets in which the collective farms or the members of the latter sell their surplus products, and in these markets prices have fallen even more than in the State and co-operative shops. In June 1936, the prices of all foodstuffs in the kolkhoz markets was, on the average, nearly 19 per cent below that in June 1935, and in 1937 prices were lower still.

The result of all this has been a very marked rise in the standard

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of life of the workers. More meat, milk, eggs, butter and other fats, cream, sugar, confectionery, fruit and vegetables, white bread, etc., are being consumed per head of a worker's family than ever before in the history of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. or of the former Tsarist Empire.

Again, expenditure on clothes, underlinen, and footwear in 1935 was 30 per cent in excess of that in 1934, in spite of the reduction of prices, because the workers could afford to spend more on dressing themselves and their families better. In 1936, expenditure on these items increased by a further 50 per cent. Similarly the expenditure on furniture, as also on books, journals, musical instruments, perfumes, cosmetics, etc., has increased considerably and is still increasing.

Workers, like other Soviet citizens, have, of course, benefited by the great improvement in the health services and education of which we treat in other chapters. The effect of the spread of education is illustrated by the composition of the delegates of the various trade union congresses held in 1937. At previous congresses there were usually a number of illiterate delegates, but in 1937 among the delegates to seventeen congresses there was not one illiterate person. Six per cent of the delegates had university education, 35·6 per cent secondary school education, and 22·8 per cent were attending courses in schools, universities, and in trade union and party schools in their spare time.

Concretely, what these facts mean in the life of a worker may be illustrated by the following extract from a New Year's article in the Soviet Press by V. V. Kaloshin (foreman of the caramel section of the Krasny Oktiabre Confectionery Works):

"It is enough to look back, to think of what my life was more than twenty years ago, here in the same confectionery factory in which I am now working as head foreman of the caramel section: the years under Tsardom pass through my mind like a nightmare of joyless youth, of work beyond human strength, when each New Year promised only new long days and months of dark oppression, exploitation, and struggle for a miserable existence.

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“Our Party of Lenin-Stalin, our Soviet power, has built up a new life in which each new year is met with pleasurable excitement at the thought of still greater improvements to come, and one experiences a feeling of pride at one’s participation in this work.

“Work has become a thing of joy, just as our whole life is joyful. Along with the growth in technique, such an increase is taking place in labour productivity and quotas are being over-fulfilled on such a scale that prescheduled fulfilment of the annual production plans has become an honourable tradition in our factory. I am happy at the thought that my section was one of the first to complete the annual programme last year.

“I remember well how the former owner of this factory, a foreign capitalist named Einem, ‘squeezed out’ just five tons of sweets a day in the section which was then very primitively equipped, from the heavy manual labour of the exploited workers, under conditions of an 11-hour working day. Now we have increased the output in the same section thirty times, despite a considerably wider assortment of high quality sweets, thirty-one new sorts having been introduced in 1936 alone.

“In addition to my actual work in production, I am in charge of the technical minimum courses and of the practical work of at least twenty-five pupils from our factory apprentice school each year. Many of my former students have become engineers or directors of enterprises, and each meeting with them inspires one with a feeling of great joy for our youth.

“Could we have dreamed of such attention, of higher education in our youth, when we hated our work and when no ray of light brightened our miserable existence? . . .

“My three sons worked with me in the Krasny Oktiabre factory until quite recently, one in the caramel section, the second as an electrician, and the third as a repair mechanic. All of them have now surpassed me far in knowledge; they graduated from higher schools. My oldest son is now a mechanical engineer, and the other two are lieutenants in the Red Army.”

Here is what N. Lonka wrote in the Soviet Press regarding

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the changes which have taken place in the working-class district of Krasnaia Presnia (Moscow): "A great change has taken place in that part of the Krasnaia Presnia election district where the industrial enterprises of old Moscow were situated. In the past, everything here had a forsaken appearance. Beyond the Gorbaty Bridge and the city gates were several small plants and workshops and the large Prokhorovka Cotton Mills.

"Beyond the factory buildings were rubbish-heaps, waste land, and the Yermakov woods. On the edge of the woods stood the poorhouse. Shooting grounds, surrounded by a fence, existed on the waste land; here the members of the imperial hunting society shot pigeons.

"Not far from the Prokhorovka Mills, on the bank of the Moscow River, was a green garden, the former estate of Count Zakrevsky. The garden contained artificial ponds forming the initials of Catherine II, and a monument to the count's favourite dog. The ponds in the park were dug by serfs. The toil of serfs also built the tower and all the other buildings on the estate.

"Two periods of human slavery have left their traces on the soil of Krasnaia Presnia—feudalism and capitalism. Both of them have been swept away by history. In the twenty years since the great Socialist Revolution, the old, small enterprises have grown into large factories and plants of Soviet industry.

"In place of a small workshop producing iron pots and saucepans, a large plant has been built, producing excavators and other machines to serve reconstructed Moscow. Other small workshops have been turned into a large enterprise manufacturing machinery for textile mills.

"The Mamontov paint and dye shops have also been reconstructed; now they are the Lakokraska (Paint and Varnish) Plant. The old Prokhorovka Mills too have undergone great changes. In the Dzerzhinsky Trekhgornaya Textile Mills the old looms and machines have been replaced by modern ones. A central heating and power station now serves the enterprises and apartment houses of this industrial district.

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“A State plant of precision instruments has been built, along with the Moscow White-Goods Factory, the Kapranov Shoe Factory and other enterprises.

“From the slums and cellars of the outlying regions workers’ families have moved to new houses in the ‘1905 Settlement,’ which has a hospital, maternity home, nurseries, and many other cultural institutions. The workers of Krasnaia Presnia have their own clubs, cinemas, libraries, studios, and a dancing school. Many of the best theatrical companies of the capital perform in the Lenin Theatre, which seats 1,300. The former count’s estate is now a park of culture and rest, and on the island, in the midst of the ponds, there are a children’s city, a library, dancing hall, and boat station.

“Factories and plants have their own sanatoriums and rest homes near Moscow and in the Crimea for their workers. The district also has a museum to perpetuate the memory of the revolutionary past of the district.

“Twenty years ago, the territory of the present Kiev district of Moscow contained only 3,700 square metres of paved streets. At present the district has 490,000 square metres of paved streets and 185,000 square metres of asphalted pavements. Blocks of large houses have replaced the hovels of the Izvozny streets with their stables, tea houses, and bars.

“In Fily, the waste ground has been covered by three settlements—‘Rabochy,’ ‘May 1,’ ‘Orjonikidze.’ On Poklonnaya Hill, seven heavy industrial plants have been built, as well as a number of enterprises which provide Moscow builders with iron concrete structures, marble, and other building materials. Here there are two cinemas, eight clubs, two parks of culture and rest, a maternity home, several model children’s institutions, and two modern cooking plants.

“Before the Revolution, on the territory of the entire Krasnaia Presnia district there were only five schools; now there are 39, attended by about 50,000 children. Many of these schools are new buildings.”

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The Odessa docker, A. A. Khenkin, now a member of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., was one of the first to follow the example of Stakhanov (the originator of the new Stakhanovite reorganization of work). At a meeting of dockers in the club of the local transport workers he said in the course of a speech:

“Where our club now stands there was formerly a workers’ night barracks. Here the dockers spent the night standing, sleeping as best they could, and down there, where we now have our little one’s crèches, there stood the ‘black-box’ (a place of so-called rest for dockers)—here our dockers would come and drown their misery in Vodka or in cards. Do you remember? The gendarmes prohibited dockers from walking along the clean, principal streets. My father worked all his life at this port. For forty-two years he laboured at unloading grain, ore, coal, oranges, and yet to the day of his death he had been unable to know his native town properly. Only in his coffin was he carried along the fine streets of the town to his burial place. . . .

“The miner Stakhanov in the old days was as much without rights as we dockers. Now he is famous and honoured. In our country shepherds become scientists . . . in our country a man earns fame and honour not only when he beats records in the air, but also when he makes records in the course of his work down an ordinary mine . . . this is because there is happiness for the man who works well in every corner of our land.”

Khenkin argued that dockers could be as good Stakhanovites in unloading vessels as miners in hewing coal, and, in accordance with his suggestions, the dockers established remarkable records in loading and unloading cargo. This Khenkin remembers how he started work at nine years of age. He recalls how his father refused the use of a revolver when during an anti-Jewish pogrom, standing at the door of his hovel, he kept off a crowd of poor hooligans who had been persuaded by the “Black Hundreds” (the Tsarist forerunners of the German Fascist Brown Shirts) that their misery was due to the Jews; he remembers how later his father died worn out by the long hours of exhausting labour. With such

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memories he naturally enough, like thousands of others, became an enthusiastic builder of the new life.

Later, addressing an election meeting of his Odessa constituents (he was a candidate for the Council of Nationalities), Khenkin said: "On the eve of the elections I involuntarily recall the difficult life of a docker in the past. At that time, under Tsarism, dockers were called 'savages.' And indeed we were savages. We lived in dirty, vermin-infested places, and for the hard labour that we performed for the capitalists we received starvation wages. The dockers' calloused hands and shoulders covered with wounds formed all the 'mechanization' at that time in the port. Look at the Odessa port to-day. See how mechanized it is! Visit our dormitories, look over our clubs. There is no comparison with the past! Soviet power has freed the docker from exhausting labour. The work of a docker has become as honourable now as that of an engineer, a pilot, miner, or tank driver."

In the course of an article on the ninth anniversary of the seven-hour day, V. A. Kondratyev said: "I have worked in this plant (Red October Cement Works in Volsk, Saratov Province) since my youth. In Tsarist times I had to work from fourteen to sixteen hours a day, earning 45 kopeks. The satisfaction resulting from normal work and rest I experienced only under the Soviet power, with the advent of which the eight-hour day was introduced. Then, for the first time in my life, I crossed the threshold of the local theatre and cinema which I began to visit in my free time.

"In Tsarist times, I made from 12 to 13 barrels in from 14 to 16 hours of prison-like labour. Under Soviet power, when I was working eight hours, I turned out 20 barrels a day. Later, when the establishment of the seven-hour day enabled me to extend my technical knowledge, I began to produce as many as 60 barrels in one shift. My earnings increased correspondingly.

"I am no exception in my plant. I am now chairman of the factory committee, and meet with various groups of workers. I have thus an opportunity of seeing how they have developed. Scores of workers, semi-literates in the past, who had also been

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employed in the plant in Tsarist times, have traversed the same road as I and have taken advantage of the reduction in their working hours for enriching their general and technical knowledge.

“While even ten years ago workers rarely went to the cinema or the theatre, elderly workers now visit the theatres two or three times a month, and the cinema more frequently. As for the young people, it goes without saying that they do so very often. In their free time they also attend club circles, engage in sports and other activities.”

The weaver Matrena Simonzhenkova describes in the course of an article how she started work as a small child, the hardships, poverty and insults she had to bear and how hopelessly she regarded the future which seemed to promise nothing but a life of toil and semi-starvation; but at the age of nineteen when the Soviet Revolution occurred, she remembers to have felt the first ray of hopeful sunshine. “I listened eagerly,” she relates, “to the teaching of the Bolsheviks; I did not understand everything they said, but instinctively I felt that they were on the right path and that this was our—the workers’—road.”

Encouraged by fellow workers, she studied and became an active worker and organizer amongst women workers.

“I know and feel how we have grown during the years of the Revolution. Some have gone farther, some not so far, but none of us have merely marked time. The Revolution has inspired us, and seemingly little, insignificant modest men and women have done great things . . . the Stakhanov movement has inspired thousands who were formerly considered backward. . . .

“Perhaps the most joyful characteristic of our times is the growth of the feeling that we are the masters of our factory, of our country, and the consequent growth of a feeling of responsibility for our work, the work of our enterprise as a whole. . . . I have experienced this myself and I have seen it in others.”

Here is the life story of the Assistant Manager of the Kalinin Textile Works (former Berg Works), Aksinia A. Shavalev. Her parents, labourers on the farm of the local landed estate owners,

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were terribly poor and afraid that the birth of their child would lead to their eviction from the hovel which passed for their home. Accordingly, when Aksinia was a year old, an uncle took her to his own poverty-stricken home. At nine years of age she started looking after the children of a weaver at the Berg Works. This weaver lived in a workers' barracks, filthy, furnished with a few poor sticks of furniture and rags.

The child often wondered what was beyond the gates, what was the constant buzzing she heard there, and why the inmates of the barracks, who spent the greater part of the day behind these gates, seemed too weary on their return home for anything but quarrelling, sleeping, occasionally drinking. By great "good fortune" Aksinia made friends with one of the women weavers, who, passing her off for a relation, got her employment at the works when she was fourteen years of age. Hard and monotonous as the work was, there were seldom any vacancies—workers would put down their names for employment and wait perhaps three or four years—but first preference was given to relatives of those already employed and such "lucky ones" had to wait perhaps one or two years.

Aksinia now herself became one of the many pale, sad-faced weary men, women, and young boys and girls who daily streamed in and out of the factory gates. She earned five roubles a month (at the then rate of exchange this would have been about 10s.). In return for a bed in a miserable, already overcrowded room, she did washing, scrubbed the floors, looked after children—all after a long hard day's work at the factory—such was her life up to the outbreak of the Revolution. Her only happy hours were those spent with some of the older workers, who explained to her how their lot might be changed, and who inspired her with dim but growing hopes of a better future.

The Revolution opened up a new life to her. During the days of the First Five-Year Plan she became one of the best shock workers, then she set herself to master the new modern technique. She was also one of the first Stakhanovites and later reorganized the

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whole works on the Stakhanov principle. The contrast in her own life and the life of her fellow-workers, she herself relates, was unbelievable. Gone were the dirty, miserable workers' barracks. Gone were the tired, pale, sullen, lifeless faces of the workers as they trudged to and from work. The men and women who now entered the factory gates were cheerful, rosy-faced, eager, they took a pride in their works, in their successes. At the age of forty-two, living in comfort, Aksinia herself, like many another former destitute daughter of destitute parents, has begun to study in earnest in the hope of becoming an engineering expert.

Aksinia Shavalev attended the 1935 Stakhanov Conference. She was a delegate to the Extraordinary Eighth All Union Soviet Congress and was there elected a member of the editorial committee for the revision of the New Constitution, and she has also been elected to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. Her busy industrial and social life has not prevented her from rearing a happy family—her eldest son has a leading position in aviation, her two daughters are at school, and every profession, every avenue of learning is open to them.

THE TRADE UNIONS

A FEW words should be said here regarding the work and functions of the Trade Unions in the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Trade Union organizations, as similar organizations in other countries, are voluntary organizations of workers. In so far as there is any compulsion, it is of the same nature as in other countries—moral and economic—moral in that the trade unionist naturally regards with disfavour the non-unionist who obtains all the advantages gained by the unions, but is not prepared to pay for or undertake any of the work entailed in winning them; economic because being a member of a Trade Union gives the worker definite advantages in regard to benefits in time of need, advancement, etc.

However, the functions of the Trade Unions in the U.S.S.R. are, of necessity, largely different from those in capitalist countries. How could it be otherwise? An exploited class when it unites in a trade organization does so principally to fight the exploiters, the capitalist class or certain sections of the latter with which a given Trade Union comes into contact, e.g. the employers of their particular trade or industry. The workers in this case organize to get the best possible terms for themselves, knowing all the time that the main aim of the owners of the factories and other enterprises is to obtain as much profit for themselves as possible. And this principle holds to a large extent even in State-owned concerns in capitalist countries. Firstly, because the psychology of the directing personnel is essentially capitalist in outlook; secondly, the conditions of labour and the general running of such enterprises, owing to the play of competition, etc., cannot but be fundamentally governed by the conditions in the predominantly prevailing private enterprises.

In a country, however, in which production is organized fundamentally for use, where the workers really feel that they are

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also masters and part-owners of the works and factories, where they know that every improvement whether by the introduction of labour-saving machinery or in their own work will be automatically reflected in an improvement in their own standard of life, the functions of the Trade Union must, in many respects, be fundamentally different from that in the capitalist countries.

In the early years of the Revolution, membership of the Trade Unions was compulsory, membership contributions being deducted from wages at the source. In addition, the State also contributed to the funds of the Trade Unions. But later, particularly with the introduction of N.E.P., the Trade Unions were reorganized on a voluntary basis, and early in 1922 the custom of deducting membership dues from wages ceased, contributions being collected from individual members by Trade Union representatives.

On January 1, 1922, the Soviet Trade Union membership was 6,740,000, but mainly as a result of a reduction in staff owing to the concentration of industry and only slightly as an effect of the introduction of voluntary membership (actually about 95 per cent of the members of the Trade Unions in 1922 voted for rejoining the Trade Unions on the voluntary basis), by January 1, 1923, the membership had fallen to 4,500,000. Since then, with the continued expansion of industry, Trade Union membership increased steadily year by year, until at the end of 1928 it was nearly 11,000,000.

At first there were only 23 large unions, some of them comprising more than one industry. Later these were subdivided into 47 smaller Trade Union organizations. In 1934, when Trade Union membership reached 18,000,000, some of the 47 unions had become extremely unwieldy, and the unions were again reorganized to form 154 separate unions.

The Soviet Trade Unions are organized on an industrial basis, and all the workers (manual, administrative, and technical) in any given branch of an industry belong to the same union.

Thus, in any enterprise or institution, all the workers, irrespective of their profession, belong to the same Trade Union. In

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1937, out of the close on 26,000,000 workers in the U.S.S.R., some 21,000,000 were members of their respective Trade Unions.¹ Membership is, of course, open to all workers, and those who are not in the unions are mainly former peasants who have entered industry comparatively recently.

Membership dues are about 1 per cent of wages, the percentage rising with wages over 500 roubles a month. Administrative costs are generally very low, much Trade Union and organization work being done by the voluntary activities of the trade unionists.

During the years of the so-called N.E.P., the main function of the Trade Unions was largely the same as in other countries, although even then, whilst looking after the interests of the workers in factory, workshop, and institution, negotiating on behalf of their members, both with private and State employers, etc., the Soviet Trade Unions participated actively in the framing of all labour laws and in every Soviet and Government activity which concerned the workers directly as such. They also participated in the drafting of production plans, etc.

With the abolition of private ownership in the means of production, the Trade Unions naturally began to take an even more active part in the planning of industry, the organization of production, etc., at the same time their main function was still to represent the workers' side in the negotiations of collective agreements and in watching over the application of the labour laws or code as it is called in factory, workshop, and institution.

Social insurance, by which a worker is automatically covered once he starts work, was administered up to 1933 by the Commissariat for Labour. The funds for social insurances were then and still are provided exclusively by the State and the various enterprises. The latter have to allocate a certain proportion over and above their wage fund to social insurance, i.e. if the total paid out in wages by a given enterprise is say £100,000, and the percentage fixed for social insurance contribution is 10 per cent, then

¹ On January 1, 1938, the membership of the Soviet Trade Unions was 22,427,000, or 82 per cent of the total workers employed.

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the enterprise would pay £10,000 into the social insurance fund over and above the £100,000 it paid out in wages.

In 1933, however, the administration of the social insurance funds was transferred to the Trade Unions, thus not only giving added importance to the latter, but—and that was the reason for the change—bringing the administration of social insurance into more direct contact with and control by the workers in the enterprises. Centres were and are established for the paying out of the various benefits in all enterprises. All social insurance officials are elected at Trade Union meetings and conferences after reports of the work of the social insurance organizations have been made by the officials and discussed. Most of the local social insurance officials are voluntary workers and the proportion of the social insurance funds consumed by administration expenses is extremely small.

In 1934, a further step was made in enhancing the importance of the Trade Unions. Up to that year all matters concerning the regulation and protection of labour were administered by the Commissariat for Labour. The Trade Unions were, of course, always consulted in the framing of laws and regulations, etc., but in the main the Trade Unions were an intermediary between the workers and the Commissariat. In 1934, however, the Commissariat for Labour was abolished and all the functions of the latter were transferred to the Trade Unions, thus giving the workers, through their own organizations, complete control over their own industrial life.

The Trade Unions, in addition to being the sole administrators of the social insurance funds, now as before represent the workers in negotiating collective agreements with the managements—these collective agreements lay down the details of the day-to-day relations and the material obligations between the management and the workers—including the wages of the various classes of workers, the kind of special clothes to be provided (where such is necessary), the provision of a fixed milk allowance (in certain occupations), the provision of facilities for training young workers, the provision of safety appliances, of dining-rooms, accommodation

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for the factory committee, crèches; to make the necessary allowance for social insurance, cultural, and housing purposes, etc.

The workers on their side undertake to carry out the production plans, to look after the machinery entrusted to them and to observe rules and regulations, etc. The local Trade Union committee also investigates any injustice on the part of the management of which an individual worker or group of workers may complain, etc. etc.

At the same time the Trade Unions now also control such questions as the introduction, maintenance, and improvement of safety appliances and the appointment of factory inspectors; the hire and dismissal of labour, technical education, and workers' housing. They participate in the drafting of production plans and supervise their fulfilment by the managers and board of the various enterprises, and generally in the regulation and control of every phase of life concerning the workers.

It may also be noted that not only through their Trade Unions, but also directly, the workers of an enterprise exercise control over production plans. This they do by the organization of what are known as production conferences, at which the management or their representatives give a report of their past work and their proposals for future work. Rank-and-file workers, as well as Trade Union officials, then criticize freely the reports of the management and make their own proposals or amendments, and these the management is bound to take into consideration, and as far as possible to incorporate in their final plans.

The Soviet Trade Unions have no need to fight any other organization for the rights of the workers, but they are the powerful instrument used by the workers for the organization of their own lives. They are powerful because they represent a section of the people in power (the other section being the peasant members of the Kolkhozy, the various State farm workers, of course, belong to their respective Trade Unions)—we do not say class in power, because with the abolition of private ownership in the means of production there are no longer classes, in the ordinary sense, in the U.S.S.R.

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The Soviet Trade Unions are powerful in the Councils of the State; no important decision is made or law promulgated without their active participation in its preparation, and at the same time they are certainly no less representative of all those who work by hand and brain than are the Trade Unions of other countries. Most of the funds raised by the Trade Unions from members' subscriptions are used by them for cultural educational work among their members, the organization of clubs, libraries, physical culture centres, Red Corners in enterprises, running of newspapers and journals. They also use their funds to assist trade unionists in various ways when necessary, etc.

The members of the various governing bodies of the Trade Unions are now elected by secret ballot. It is interesting to note that of the members elected to the factory workshop committees in 1937-38, nearly 80 per cent were non-party people; 27 per cent of those elected were women. Of the members elected to the Central Committees of the various Trade Unions, 33.4 per cent were non-party people, 25 per cent of the total elected being women.

WHAT HAVE THE PEASANTRY GAINED BY THE REVOLUTION?

AS we have seen in a previous chapter, there are now no longer any Soviet peasant families who are landless or who have no farm stock and agricultural implements with which to work their land. The poverty of the pre-war Russian village is a thing of the past. The Kolkhozy, and with them, of course, their members, are becoming better off year by year. Their deposits in the banks and the expenditure of the Kolkhozy as a whole and of the individual members have risen from year to year.

To take but a few examples: the income of the Kolkhozy of the Dniepropetrovsk Province in 1937, according to preliminary returns, was 481,000,000 roubles, as against 378,000,000 roubles in 1936, and the amount received by the Kolkhoz members, in accordance with their labour days, has increased by 40 per cent. In some districts of the province, the monetary value of a labour day was almost doubled as compared with 1936. For instance, in the Genichesk District, the collective farms paid an average of 4·02 roubles per labour day in 1937 as against 2·46 roubles in 1936. A number of leading collective farms have achieved still greater successes.

This, of course, is only the cash value of the member's share in the produce of the Kolkhozy. In addition, every member gets a share of the produce also in kind; this is usually more than he requires for his own use and the surplus he is at liberty to sell in the market, if he so desires. It should also be borne in mind that a "labour day" is not necessarily the same as a day's work: it is a certain norm of work which is usually less than the amount actually worked during a day, i.e. in one day's work one, one and a half, two or more norms of work (labour days) is often accomplished.

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Moreover, practically every family in the various Kolkhozy has its own cow, poultry, kitchen garden, often also pigs, sheep, goats, etc.

Discussing the results of the work of the "Forward" Collective Farm (Dimitrov District of Moscow Province) in 1937, V. I. Sidirov, manager of the cottage laboratory of this farm, said: "The persistent, energetic work of our members will be amply rewarded out of the returns from the rich harvest. For each labour day the members will receive approximately 31 kilogrammes of grain, vegetables, and other produce, and 3 roubles in cash. The 130 people working in the collective farm produced 34,000 labour days.

"Many members have 500 to 600 labour days to their credit. There is, for instance, the sixty-year old Drosdov, who in addition to doing general work on the farm, looks after the potato store-house. Drosdov has approximately 500 workdays to his credit and his wife has a further 200. In addition, like every other collective farmer, Drosdov has his own house, garden, pigs, and poultry. Drosdov is no exception. All our members have earned enough to ensure them a well-to-do life."

This farm had raised a record crop for the Moscow Province of 60 bushels of winter wheat to the acre, and Sidorov, of course, is proud of this fact. He says quite justly: "Naturally, I as manager of the cottage laboratory have done my bit to introduce modern agricultural methods, which enabled the farm to set the record."

In the course of the same interview (published in the Soviet Press) Sidorov stated that for 1938 they planned an increase of their record yield by an increasing use of fertilizers and generally improving methods of work. He further pointed out that the well-being of the Kolkhoz members and their cultural level were, and are being, raised. Thirty members are participating in an agricultural study circle conducted by a scientific worker of the Moscow Timiryazev Agricultural Academy. Fifty people are attending evening courses for adults. In addition, there is a political study class for women organized on the initiative of Sidorov. This class

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was originally organized in order to draw the women more actively into the social and public life of the farm. Now it is also attended by men.

At the same time, work is being done in connecting the village with the Moscow electrical supply. "We intend," said Sidorov, "to put electric light in every house as well as to electrify the cattle sheds and other buildings. We also plan to do our threshing by electric power. We intend also to build a new piggery, a grain drier, and a granary equipped with mechanical grain cleaners. The old days when the peasant used to lie on the stove all the winter are gone for good. Our collective farm village is just as busy in the winter as in the summer."

In the Kolkhoz "Privet" (Isil-Kulak region—Omsk), situated far from any urban area, the complaint of the Kolkhozniks is that they are unable to obtain pieces of good music in the village and regional shops. Many of the Kolkhozniks have violins, violoncellos, gramophones, and other musical instruments, and in 1937 they started to organize a school of music.

The "Krasnoye Sormovo" Kolkhoz in the village Orinin (Chuvash), in 1937 subscribed for their sixty-three households for one hundred and eighty-three copies of various periodicals. In addition Orinin has its own local paper, of which one of the members of the Kolkhoz is editor. Before the Revolution there was only one girl (now cook to the Kolkhoz) who could read, and most of the men were also illiterate. Now there are no illiterates; among the members of the Kolkhoz are teachers, agronomists, graduates, and students of technical colleges, universities, etc.

Have the Orinites a right to congratulate themselves on the Revolution?

The Kolkhoznik N. E. Dolidge, chairman of the Dzhumat "Stalin" Kolkhoz (near Tbilisi, former Tiflis), relates that he has worked in the Dzhumat Kolkhoz for over ten years, and after describing how the now flourishing Kolkhoz with its good harvests of tea and lemons has been organized upon a former wilderness where but a short time ago roamed jackals, he said: "The peasants

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of the village Dzhumat formerly only grew maize; starvation, or at least semi-starvation, was their lot—our old men sing many a song of the accursed days of old. Now these same peasants are members of the Kolkhoz and how different their lives. During the last two years alone, out of the 350 farms covered by our Kolkhoz, 200 have built new comfortable houses . . . we are gathering rich harvests of lemons, mandarins, and tea.

“The annual income of our Kolkhoz, which during the first years of its existence was about 100,000 roubles, is now several millions. Our village now has a school, clinic, a timber mill and brick kiln, a creamery. . .

“It is good to live and work in the Kolkhoz; our young people have no idea what life was like in the old days, how we lived in mud huts. The land then belonged to Prince Gurieli. My father paid over more than half of all his income to this Prince as rent for the tiny plot of land he cultivated. The rest of my father’s earnings was only enough to feed the family for two to three months, and then my father had to seek additional work.”

Here are a few examples cited by N. S. Khrushchev at a meeting in Moscow, December 6, 1937: “Take the village of Kulikovo, Communist District, now the ‘Path to Socialism’ Collective Farm. What did this village have in the past? In the village lived 15 kulaks, 8 merchants, 5 priests and deacons, 2 policemen, 149 middle farmers, 67 poor farmers, 30 landless peasants. The best land belonged to the handful of kulaks, merchants, and priests.

“The harvest they reaped was not large: 50 poods of rye, 35 poods of oats, 350 poods of potatoes. Before the Revolution the peasants did not sow wheat; they planted potatoes and radishes, because these were the chief food of the poor and middle peasants.

“The income of a middle peasant’s household amounted to 16 to 20 poods of rye, 13 to 15 poods of oats, 80 to 100 poods of potatoes. The income of the poor peasants was still less. Most of the peasants had only sufficient grain to last until Christmas, until the festival of St. Nicholas.

“Before the Revolution there were two schools in the village

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of Kulikovo, in which forty-five children studied. There were two teachers in the schools. More than half the population was illiterate. Almost all the women of this village were illiterate.

"Now the 'Path to Socialism' Collective Farm, which is in the village of Kulikovo, combines 189 households. The collective farm has 1,100 hectares of land and is served by a machine and tractor station, it has two oil engines, mechanical threshers, two horse-drawn threshers, 150 iron ploughs, 60 harrows, 25 digging machines, a truck and other machinery.

"The yield per hectare at the collective farm in 1937 amounted to 190 poods of rye, 120 poods of oats, 1,200 poods of potatoes, 1,800 poods of beets. The collective farm harvested 150 poods of wheat per hectare in 1937.

"What are the incomes of the collective farmers? Collective Farmer Fyodor Osin, a former middle farmer, this year earned 240 poods of grain, 1,200 poods of potatoes, 470 poods of vegetables, 200 poods of root crops, 3,150 roubles in money.

"Agrippina Kurova, a former poor peasant who lived in dire poverty, in 1937 received for her labour days, 75 poods of grain, 550 poods of potatoes, 160 poods of vegetables, 85 poods of root crops, 250 poods of fodder. Every collective farmer has a cow, a sheep, some pigs, and so on.

"The village now has three schools in which 170 children study, instead of the 45 before the Revolution. Fifty of these children study in a seven-year school. There are 11 teachers in the village. There is an evening school for adults. In addition 22 collective farmers study in a school for collective farmers active in public life, 12 in a technical college. The village has a club, party reference room, library, and radio.

"Under the Soviet power three of the formerly middle and poor peasants of the village of Kulikovo have received a higher education, six have graduated from the pedagogical school, forty-five have graduated from the seven-year school.

"Let us take another village, that of Koltovo, Kashira District, now the 'Spark' Collective Farm. There were 120 families in the

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village. There lived in the village the landlord, the priest, the deacon—this inevitable ‘inventory’ of almost every village—7 merchants and 15 kulaks. The landlord and kulaks owned 790 dessiatines of land, the priest and the deacon 130, the middle and poor peasants 230 dessiatines for 80 households. The grain yield before the Revolution did not exceed 400 to 450 kilogrammes per hectare.

“What were the incomes of the peasants? The peasant Koshelev, before the Revolution, had 30 to 35 poods of grain a year and 150 to 160 poods of potatoes.

“Before the Revolution there was one school in the village in which 35 children studied. The school had one teacher and one priest who taught religion.

“Now this village is the ‘Spark’ Collective Farm. There are 97 households in the collective farm. The collective farm has a dairy farm with 180 heads of cattle, 1,050 hectares of land; formerly the poor and middle peasants of this village had 230 dessiatines!¹

“The collective farm has five reapers, seven mowers, eighteen ploughs with double shares, four cultivators, three trucks, an electric mill, a binder, and so on.

“Formerly not a single middle peasant, to say nothing of the poor peasant, even dreamed that he would have a machine to till the land, and now this is an actuality.

“In 1937, the collective farm harvested 1.19 tons of grain to the hectare and 2.5 tons on some sections. The same Koshelev, who previously had between 30 and 35 poods of grain a year, now received 300 poods of grain, 600 poods of potatoes, 150 poods of hay, 70 poods of apples, and 2,000 roubles in money.

“The woman collective farmer, Kolushkina, a poor peasant in the past, has received not only the right to vote on an equal basis with men, but has also received all the material blessings which the country has at its disposal. The labour day is calculated on an equal basis for men and women collective farmers. Kolushkina received 450 poods of grain, 500 poods of potatoes, 650 poods

¹ About 253 hectares.

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of fodder crops, and 2,400 roubles in money. With such incomes let the husband try and work badly!

"Studying in the elementary school of the village of Koltovo are 115 children, and in the secondary school (for two villages), 280 children.

"Under the Soviet power, three villagers have become engineers, seven teachers, two agronomists, one a physician, one a Red Army commander, and two artists."

And now here are a few more sketches which illustrate perhaps better than figures what the establishment of the Soviet regime has meant for the former poverty-stricken peasants of Imperial Russia, and how the change strikes them.

"If," said a Dniepropetrovsk Kolkhoznik at a cattle breeders' meet in Moscow in November 1936, "the former landowners—Reiman and Reikov—now living abroad could spend a day on our Kolkhoz (they had better not attempt this though) they would not recognize their former estates. These estates, now our Kolkhoz, cover an area of 11,800 hectares. The lords of the manor had at best worked the land most primitively; when the Kolkhoz was formed much of the land was in an utterly neglected overgrown condition, with ruined outhouses, some was bare steppe. But with the help of the State, we have transformed the bare land into fruitful fields, we have constructed some score of brick dwelling-houses, stables, hen-runs, piggeries. We have constructed 9 smithies, 10 carpentry shops, 3 pumping stations, an electrical station, mechanical cotton driers, cheese-making plant, etc. We have four motor cars; tractors and combines work on our fields.

"Nothing remains of what Messrs. Reiman and Reikov invested in the land. Everything has been reconstructed, done anew, far more solidly and up to date than the landowners had ever even dreamed of. Whereas in their best years Reiman and Reikov harvested on an average 40 to 50 poods per hectare of wheat and somewhat less rye, the Kolkhoz on the same land in 1936, which meteorologically was by no means very favourable, and when the harvest was considered only as average, gathered 75 poods of

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wheat per hectare and 90 poods of rye per hectare. Moreover, the Kolkhoz also raised cotton, beet, as well as a good quantity of wool, hides, dairy produce, etc.

“We have given much needed produce to the country,” exclaimed the Kolkhoznik, “and at the same time our Kolkhoz members have become well-to-do; we have learnt how to bring into harmony our own personal interests with the interests of the community and the State as a whole.

“Gone is the miserable-looking, starved, ragged, barefooted peasant, dirty, ignorant, inarticulate. Not only do our members get good money and produce for the work they do in the Kolkhoz, but most of them have a cow, pigs, sheep, poultry of their own. Our children attend school. Many of our Kolkhozniks have daughters and sons in secondary schools, colleges, universities—one is studying to be an agronomist, another is studying biology, one is training or working as an engineer, another, again, is an aviator, doctor, teacher, etc. We have all learnt to straighten our backs and to expect something more from life than heart-breaking toil and starvation. Yes, if our former masters the landowners could come back they would certainly have an apoplectic fit; they would find their former serfs in all but name no longer sharing a dark hut with their calves and poultry, but many housed in comfortable dwellings (and others to be so housed in the near future), with electric light, radio and many other conveniences, of which we had never even heard before. They would find the peasant children, instead of playing in the mud and dying off like flies for want of care, now playing in bright crèches and receiving care and attention no worse, in essentials perhaps even better, than those which their own children used to get in their fine manors.

“And how they would rub their eyes at our library, on books for which we spent this year 10,000 roubles; at our cinema, our telephones, our rest home which we constructed on the shores of the Sea of Azov.”

Now for the following interesting story: A writer of cinema

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script in search of local colour for a film went (late in 1936) to Pagost, a typical White Russian village near Minsk. Here he asked some local officials where he could see an ordinary woman member of a Kolkhoz who used to go out to work as a daily in former times and her daughters. The officials shrugged their shoulders—“My dear fellow, call at any hut you like in the village and you will find what you want.”

In the morning the writer, walking along the street, decided to try his luck in one of the little houses. Here he met a typical peasant woman, fifty-eight years of age. When questioned, this woman related that she had started “suffering” (this was her own expression) when at seven years of age she started working in the houses and farms of local landowners. “Right up to 1917 my back was scarcely ever unbent; my only food was potatoes.”

“And now?” asked the writer.

The woman looked at him in angry amazement. What an absurd question!

“Why ask?” she rejoined at last—“see for yourself,” and she waved a hand round the room. It was a bright, airy room, the floor, scrubbed white, was covered here and there with patterned rugs. There was a table, chairs and pictures, an iron bedstead at one wall, a wardrobe at the other, in another larger room lived her son and daughter-in-law; then she took him round the farm; she had several pigs, geese, ducks, hens, and a lamb.

“Now you see how I live under the Soviets,” she said, when they had returned to the room, “and things will be better soon. But really, the most important point is that I feel so different. In the old days no one treated me as an individual: I was at the beck and call of those I worked for; my needs, my comforts, whoever stopped to think of them? not even I myself. But now,” she continued, “particularly since I became a member of the Kolkhoz, I know I have rights as well as duties. I can always have my say; I can scold, too, when I see things done badly. I am only sorry I am still illiterate; however, I am brave enough to speak out at meetings,” she concluded, half shyly, half defiantly.

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"Have you a daughter?" asked the writer.

"Yes, here she is," said the woman, pointing to the photograph of a pleasant-looking young girl, "my Nina—she is at present in Minsk studying to become a doctor." She showed him a package of letters from her daughter carefully tied up. . . . "To think," she said reflectively, after he had read them aloud, "that I should have a clever daughter like that!"

After saying goodbye, he looked in at a number of other houses in the village; in every one the story was very similar and in nearly all of them he heard of daughters and sons who had studied or were studying in Minsk and other big towns. Later, chance peasants whom he met on his way to Minsk told him emphatically that in other neighbouring villages people lived better and were better educated than in the village he had just come from, and when he expressed surprise they pressed him to come and see for himself. . . .

At a meeting in the club of the village Anastrasievsk in the Azov-Black Sea area, S. A. Sadko, the Kuban-Cossack delegate to the Extraordinary Soviet Congress held in Moscow in November 1936, gave a report to the villagers of this Congress, at which the New Constitution had been adopted.

Rank-and-file members of Kolkhozy participated in the discussion. Said one, P. A. Korzh: "Reflecting on the Constitution and Stalin's speech, I kept on thinking of the contrast between our life before the Revolution and now. Whence have come our achievements? There is only one reply: from the State, from our Soviet Government and Bolshevik Party. Who gave us the Kolkhozy? Who gave us tractors and combines? Who gave us electric light and machinery? All this was given to us by the Soviet State."

Another Kolkhoznik, N. I. Garkusha, said: "What sort of a report have we heard? It is the report of our fellow landsman who went to help in the organization of most important matters of state. Of course, this could never have happened formerly, it need hardly be said. What I am interested in is this—I participated

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in the civil war on the side of the Reds and not as some of our Cossacks, if they can forgive me, and so we fought for, and won, power and our rights.

"When I returned from the Red Army, I again began to work on my farm, but when the Kolkhozy were being organized I refused to take part; I remained a convinced individual farmer right up to 1933. Then I began to see the advantages of the new ways and I entered the Kolkhoz. Now I see that it was not enough to conquer power for ourselves; it was still necessary to build a road towards happiness, and this road was the Kolkhoz.

"This is the road along which Stalin led us, and for this we give Stalin our Cossack thanks. The Cossacks, together with the whole of the peasantry, now have full rights to elect and to be elected as representatives of the people, but most important of all is the fact that our life is quite different, is getting really good."

Another Cossack Kolkhoznik, Trofin Esaulenko, declared: "It was said at one time that the Kuban Cossacks lived well, but who is it who lived well? It was the Kulaks who lived well, but not fellows like us. Stalin has shown us the right way to life, and now we are all becoming well-to-do. Just look what we had two years ago, and what we now have. There is no comparison. This is what Kolkhoz life is like. Our Kuban land is indeed famously good land, but it is only now that we have started really appreciating it and to make it bring forth all it can and must do. We want to grow as much grain as possible in order to get all sorts of things."

A woman member of the Kolkhoz, Alexandra M. Selivanova, spoke mainly about children. She said: "I have seven children; all of them are literate, some have already finished their studies and some are still attending the ten-year school. We live well and for our children we are preparing a still better life.

"There is no need to conceal it; we did not all understand straight away the significance of a Kolkhoz. There were idlers and simulators, and there were also misunderstandings in regard to cattle. I myself was not without faults, but Stalin told us then

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'you will have cows, don't be uneasy'; and now what do we see? Not merely has every Kolkhoznik got one cow, but many have two calves, poultry, and pigs. Why do I respect the Bolsheviks? It is because they always keep their promises. If they say they are going to do a thing they invariably do it."

At this meeting no less than twenty rank-and-file Kolkhozniks spoke, but the list of would-be speakers had by no means been exhausted when late at night the meeting had to be closed.

How absolutely correct was Lenin when he said that the individualist psychology of the small peasant could only be changed by altering the material basis of his life, by the introduction into agriculture on a large scale of the tractor and other agricultural machinery and electrification.

Whilst not yet by any means all that can be desired, life in the village is now infinitely better, more comfortable and interesting than it had ever been in Tsarist days even for the middle peasant of those days, let alone the poverty-stricken landless, or almost landless, poor peasant.

It is interesting to observe that, in 1936, the value of the retail trade in clothes and manufactures in the rural areas amounted to nearly 5·5 milliard roubles, being 5·2 times that in 1928. The value of the boots sold in these areas in 1936 was 1,342,000,000 roubles or 9·7 times that in 1928; of soap, cosmetics, sanitary articles of all kinds 929,000,000 roubles or 8·3 times; confectionery 1·4 milliard roubles or 17·7 times; of sugar, 1·7 milliard roubles or 6·3 times, household goods, 786 millions or 4·0 times, and of cultural goods (books, musical instruments, radios, sports goods, etc.), 859 million roubles or 23·7 times that in 1928. Many of these goods were, of course, scarcely ever seen in the peasant huts before the Revolution.

And with these changes the psychology of the peasant is changing—not indeed overnight—but still very considerably. The village is being brought nearer the town; the villager sees and is being daily more interested in much of the wonders of modern science and technique, his horizon is broadening, he sees by prac-

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tical example and personal experience the advantages of collective work, and gradually he is shedding the backward individualist psychology so characteristic of the small peasant, and becoming a conscious builder of a socialist society based on large-scale collective labour.

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WHAT has the twenty years under review meant for the women of the U.S.S.R.? We have already seen that from the first the Soviet Constitution put women on a complete equality with men; but political equality without economic equality is of very little benefit to a class or to an individual or sex. Political equality is valuable in so far as it is used as a weapon to fight for economic equality which alone makes for real equality. And since the Soviets were out to establish real equality, not only were women given equal political rights, but they set out to put her on an economic equality with man. This was not easy since it went counter to the traditions and customs of ages.

Large sections of men, particularly in the villages, and even many women, scoffed at the idea; often enough consciously, still more frequently unconsciously, many opposed the establishment of real equality between men and women. The idea that there were only three natural spheres for women—the three K's as the Germans put it, "Küche, Kinder, Kirche"—died hard. But the Soviet authorities, supported by the most progressive men and women of the country, persisted. They established the principle of equal wages for equal work between men and women; to free woman from her forced enslavement to the kitchen and washtub, they began to organize from the first public dining-rooms—both general and attached to factory, workshop, school, and institution—also wash-houses, laundries, etc. To enable woman to earn her own living, whether married or not, if she so desired, crèches and kindergartens were organized throughout the country where women could leave their children in safety whilst they were at work. They were also given adequate leave of absence with pay before and after childbirth, time off during the day to nurse their children without loss of pay, a layette or an allowance

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for one and a maintenance allowance for every infant up to one year.

The portals of every educational institute and every profession were opened wide for woman on an equality with man, and she could apply for and be appointed to every municipal, State, or any other post in the land. Marriage was no longer a bar to any career, and in the matter of divorce, of rights to common property, obligations and rights in regard to children, the wife was no longer at any disability as compared with the husband.

All this, of course, does not mean that women in the U.S.S.R. no longer perform the functions of housewives—very large numbers of women do—but a married woman is no longer debarred from working in a factory, workshop, field, school, or laboratory if she desires to do so. If she wishes to be economically independent of her husband, there is no one who can say her nay, and the fact that she has children does not debar her from it either.

As we have pointed out, equality of status could not be obtained overnight: there was much obstinate opposition and many of the women who first stood up for their independence and took advantage of their new rights, had an extremely uncomfortable time, particularly in the outlying country districts. This opposition to women's equality has not died down even now in the more backward areas of some of the national minorities; but as women prove their worth in leading positions and insist on their rights with determination, this opposition is dying down.

At the same time the economic development of the country, the establishment of large-scale industry and agriculture, has made possible the entry of large numbers of women into the social economic life of the people which was wellnigh impossible, both from an economic and psychological point of view, whilst handicraft and small-scale production and particularly small individual farming still flourished.

In Tsarist Russia, too, there were women employed outside their own homes. But according to an 1897 census no less than 55 per cent of women employed outside their homes were domestic

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servants or charwomen, and a further 25 per cent were employed as day workers in rural areas on the estates of the rich landowners or on kulak farms. Only 4 per cent of the total women in gainful employment were engaged in the educational and health services, 13 per cent were employed in industry and construction, and 3 per cent in other employment.

On the other hand, in 1936, only 2 per cent of the women in gainful employment worked as domestic servants (home workers as they are now called), 20 per cent were engaged in the educational and health services, 39 per cent in industry and construction, 15 per cent in transport, trade, and public dining-rooms, 7 per cent in State and public institutions, 7 per cent in the sovkhozy and machine-tractor stations, 10 per cent in other employment.

The actual number of women employed in various ways has increased steadily during the last ten years. The following table makes this very clear:

	Number of women employed. (Thousands)		Proportion of total workers (Per cent).
	1929.	1936.	
National economy as a whole ..	3,304	8,492	34
Large-scale industry ..	939	2,908	39
Building	64	402	19
Transport	104	446	18
Education	439	1,076	56
Health (including medical profes- sion)	283	643	72
Other institutions	239	540	31

As we have seen, Soviet women are now free to enter every profession. For this as well as in order to enjoy a full cultural life education is essential, and women are now taking increasing advantage of the opportunities open to them.

¹ By hand and brain.

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The number of women attending special colleges of all kinds, including art, teaching, medicine, social and political economy, transport, industrial, agricultural, etc., increased from 73,300 in 1928 to 289,000 in 1936. Women attending universities increased from 48,000 in 1928 to 198,500 in 1936.

Steadily, too, women are taking a greater and greater interest in social and political work. This is shown by the increase in the proportion of women members of town and village soviets since 1926:

	Proportion of Total Members.				
	1926.	1927.	1929.	1931.	1934.
Women members of Urban Soviets ..	18·2	19·6	24·6	25·9	30·4
Women members of Rural Soviets ..	9·9	11·2	18·8	21·0	26·2

Thus the villages still lag behind the towns, but they approximate far more closely than in earlier years.

It is evident that the peasant women of the U.S.S.R. took Stalin's advice in February 1933 at the All-Union Conference of Kolkhoz workers very much to heart. Stalin in this speech said: "It is not only that women form half the population, but the kolkhoz movement has brought forward numerous able and remarkable women in leading positions . . . this Congress itself shows how far we are from the conception of women as necessarily backward. Women in the kolkhozy have now become a great force and it is our duty to help their progress. . . . As regards the kolkhoz women themselves, they should bear in mind the importance of the kolkhoz movement for women, they should remember that in the villages it is only in the kolkhozy that the woman has an opportunity to stand on an equal footing with the man. . . ."

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Since then women have not only flocked into the kolkhozy and often been amongst their most loyal, active, and enthusiastic members, but more and more of them have taken leading positions.

In 1936, the average of the total number of labour days worked by the members of a kolkhoz household was 377; of this number women accounted for 135 or 35.8 per cent of the total. Women constitute 18 per cent among the members of the managements of kolkhozy, about 16 per cent of the directors, and they also constitute 67 per cent of the leaders of sections working in the fields; some 22 per cent of the brigade leaders in animal-breeding farms are women. Women agronomists constitute 10 per cent of the total number of agronomists in the machine tractor stations; 11 per cent of club managers are women, and so on.

Some of these proportions may not seem so high, but when one recalls the illiteracy, ignorance, and subjection to their menfolk of women in the pre-revolution Russian village, they are really rather marvellous. Well might Stalin say, in a speech on November 10, 1935: "The kolkhozy have made woman independent. She now no longer works mainly for the benefit of her father before marriage and of her husband after marriage, but before all she now works for herself. This means a real liberation of our peasant women, a liberation brought about by the kolkhozy which has put the toiling woman on an equality with the toiling man."

Whilst marriage and motherhood are not considered valid grounds for closing any post or profession to women, both are held in high esteem. True, divorce is granted readily at the request of either party, but it is not encouraged, and frequent divorce and remarriage are, whilst not prohibited, definitely condemned, and where there are children both mother and father are not allowed to forgo their responsibilities.

It may not be out of place to stress the fact here that whilst the responsibility of parents for their children are insisted on by the authorities, the Soviet Government does its share in looking after the welfare of Soviet children; boys and girls, like men and women, being put upon a complete equality. This point may per-

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haps be best illustrated by a brief quotation from a Britisher, the Dean of Canterbury, who would not naturally be expected to be enthusiastic about the Soviets and who had, indeed, many misgivings about them before he visited the U.S.S.R. In the course of an interview he remarked:

“For thirty years I have urged that every child should be given the utmost opportunity for development of his or her powers; this is the debt we owe to children and it is of immense value for the public welfare to tap every source of talent.

“Here (in the U.S.S.R.) I see the desire and the will that it shall be done more thoroughly, perhaps, than in any other part of the world. I was privileged to visit the House of Pioneers which I was told is the forerunner of the projected Moscow Palace of Pioneers. I know of no place finer in the world of its kind.

“They call the present place a house, but even in this stage it is more like a palace. Its artistic beauty, first of all, made me enthusiastic. Obviously, the decorations have been done by true artists and craftsmen of a very high order and the furniture shows imagination and taste.

“In the Kiev Palace of Pioneers I saw an exhibit of children’s drawings and paintings. They were full of splendid promise.”

He knew about the economic progress of the Soviet Union, “but,” he said, “I have been doubtful at times about the arts and humanities (the artistic and emotional side of life). My visit to the House of Pioneers has quite reassured me. To pick out from the scholars of the ordinary schools those who desire, or show themselves capable of, further development and to place these children under the sympathetic guidance of real masters of many arts and sciences, is work of the highest order. I am no longer surprised at the musical achievements of Russian youth in open competition with the world.”

He was also glad to see “that girls in the U.S.S.R. share such privileges equally with boys.” In this respect the country was laying good foundations for the future. He was convinced that:

“One of the most sinister movements in the Fascist countries

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is that which relegates women and girls to the kitchen and the home, denying them a chance for equal development with men in artistic, scientific, and public pursuits. My own mother, though she had nine children, insisted on a wider contact than the home afforded. This left its impression upon her children. She was the better mother in every way for it."

He also stated that he was struck by the equality and complete comradeship of women and men which exists in the Soviet Union on a countrywide scale. In various Moscow children's theatres for various ages he was much impressed by the zest of boys and girls alike and the natural way in which they mingled.

What the Dean of Canterbury says here about the Palace of Pioneers and the care taken to develop talent coincides entirely with what we have ourselves observed many times.

Professor G. W. Tyrrell, A.R.C.Sc., D.Sc., F.R.S.E., F.G.S., University of Glasgow, who participated in the Seventeenth International Geological Congress, held in Moscow in the summer of 1937, was equally enthusiastic regarding the talents developed by Soviet children. In the course of a description of his journey in the Kuznetzk Basin, he said:

"Near Kusadeevo Station our train made an enforced stop close to a Pioneers' Camp for the children of railway workers, and in a few moments the train swarmed with a crowd of boys and girls in their uniforms of blue blouses and red scarves. Nothing would do but that the geological party should visit their camp. Of course, we did so, and these jolly, laughing, unselfconscious children with their half-dozen adult supervisors, immediately organized an impromptu entertainment for us, consisting of folk-dancing, songs, and a short dramatic piece, the music being supplied by a small boy with a large accordion. It was all a delightful unstaged and unexpected treat which made a great impression on the party."

Mother and infant welfare have received quite exceptional care in the U.S.S.R. The number of mother and infant welfare consultation centres has increased from nine, in the urban areas in 1914, with a capacity for treating 44,000 cases, to 1,371 with a capacity for 12,296,000 cases in 1931, and 4,175 with a capacity

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for treating 39,300,000 in 1937. Considerable work has been done in rendering births painless. In Sverdlovsk, for instance, during the year 1937, more than 50,000 mothers were given treatment for ensuring a painless confinement; in Leningrad there were 63,000 such cases. In all, over 270,000 mothers have received this treatment and, in general, the U.S.S.R. claims to take first place in the world in the application of this boon to women. The birth-rate is increasing throughout the U.S.S.R. According to incomplete data, the total number of births in January–March 1937 was 30 per cent in excess of the corresponding quarter of 1936. The great increase in the number of women working outside the home and participating in public life has evidently not affected the birth-rate.

The number of places in permanent crèches in urban areas for infants and very young children has increased from 550 in 1914 to 274,000 in 1932 and 627,817 in 1937. In the rural areas, where there were practically no crèches in 1914, there were 350,000 permanent crèches in 1932 and 500,000 in 1936. In addition, in the summer, numerous temporary crèches are established in the rural areas. Again, in 1913, some 7,000 children attended kindergartens in Russia, but in 1936 over 4,270,000 Soviet children attended kindergartens, i.e. more than treble the children in the kindergartens of the U.S.A., France, Japan, and Poland taken together.

As a result of all this, both the maternity and infant death-rate have been decreased enormously.

All this work in the care of the health of the people, particularly of mothers and children, is very manifest in the fine physique of young people in the streets, the schools, the sports fields, the factories and workshops, and on the fields, which all recent visitors to the U.S.S.R. have noted.

The following two examples illustrate both the difficulties which many women encountered when they sought to take advantage of their new rights and the new life these have given them.

Here, for instance, is the short biography of one such woman from Azerbaijan, Basti Bagirova. One of a family of nine children, she was born in the village of Abdulla-Bek; her father had but

a miserable plot of land and worked as a day labourer on the farm of the local landed estate owner, unable to provide sufficient food for his family. Six of the children died in infancy or when still quite young. While Basti herself was still a child, her father died. Her mother, with three small children on her hands, tried to raise cotton on her tiny plot, but for want of water, which could only be obtained from the lord of the manor and which the latter refused to give the poor widow, all the labour of the woman and her children was in vain—half starved, they could only work for a pittance on the master's land. At fifteen years of age Basti was married, without, of course, having any say in the matter, to a man as poor, if not poorer, than herself, having neither land nor cattle. She had but passed from one state of misery to another, with added burdens . . . and however able and willing, no hope whatever of the future.

Then came the Soviet Revolution. The poor peasants, among them Basti and her husband, were granted a plot of land, a cart, an ox, and Basti started at last to work for herself and to taste the fruits of her own labour. Their plot of land was small, the work was hard, the fruits were not great, but still there was at least something to show for all the hard work, and she breathed more easily than ever before.

Later, in 1930, a cotton-raising Kolkhoz was formed in the village and Basti was one of the first to join it, and was chosen a member of the Administrative Board. Here she worked with a will and began to show her abilities and organizing talents. Hitherto she had worked for herself, now in the Kolkhoz she worked not only for herself but also for the common good—this inspired her to greater efforts than ever. Like other cotton gatherers she used to gather her cotton with one hand, in accordance with the age-long tradition, and by dint of honest hard work she managed to gather in 1931 some 50 kilograms of cotton per day, but she reflected that if she could use both hands she could gather perhaps twice as much—then she, like many of her comrades, began to think out ways and means of increasing the productivity of her labour.

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There is no longer a dearth of water for the cotton fields of Azerbaijan, and Basti, by repeatedly watering and weeding the Kolkhoz cotton fields, has increased the cotton harvest enormously. Up to 1936, some 30 to 40 centners of cotton per hectare was considered a record harvest in Azerbaijan. In 1937 Basti obtained 120 centners of cotton per hectare! In 1936, Basti's record for cotton picking reached 464 kilograms per day. Not content with getting such good results herself, she has inspired and taught large numbers of other workers, both of her own Kolkhoz and other Kolkhozy, to obtain similar results. Indeed, her favourite pupil, a slim young girl, Manya Kerimova, gathered 504 kilograms per day in 1936. Jealous? Not a bit of it; Basti was delighted with Manya's result—but she set to, and working with a will to break the record, Basti gathered 648 kilograms a day in 1937, which record was again broken by another Stakhanovite who gathered 650 kilograms!

Basti says she has never felt so happy in her life. She delights to help backward Kolkhoz members. Not only has she now a decent human existence; not only does she feel free to follow her bent, but she knows that her work and her efforts help her fellow workers to enjoy a fuller life. The whole country knows of her splendid work—she has been honoured by both the local authorities and the Central Soviet Government. Visitors from all parts of the Union come to consult her. It is related that at an opera in Baku on November 7th, the composer noted Basti Bagirova in the audience and in the interval he sought her out and asked her how she liked the opera; he was particularly anxious to hear her criticism to find out in what way she would have liked it to be different.

She is sent as delegate to Soviet Congresses in Moscow—she participated in the editorial commission set up by the Eighth Soviet Congress in 1936 which adopted the new Soviet Constitution. Finally, she was elected to the Council of Nationalities.

Could Basti, the daughter of a poor Azerbaijan village labourer, whose life seemed destined to pass in squalor and misery like that of the thousands of other poor Azerbaijan girls, even in her wildest dreams ever have thought of reaching such heights of

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usefulness and happiness were it not for the Soviet Revolution? Certainly Basti herself does not think so.

At a meeting of her electors, she said: "Soviet women have won the right to govern the State. Tens of thousands of women in our illimitable Fatherland have become doctors, engineers, directors, aviators. I, too, was ignorant, illiterate. The Soviet Government, the Lenin-Stalin Communist Party, our dear beloved Stalin, has given me a chance . . . formerly I had nothing, now I have a bright, comfortable dwelling. I have a radio, gramophone, furniture, books, and everything I need. I live well; millions of toilers in our country lead an equally well-to-do life."

Here is the story of another woman, this time from Ryazan (in Central Russia).

Pasha was one of twelve children living with their parents on a tiny plot of bad land. They had one cow and an old horse, as starved as his master. The father, Makushin, after fighting in the Far East in the Russo-Japanese War, came back to his native village, and, unable to feed his family, sought his luck in St. Petersburg—became a caretaker with a miserable wage; the mother went into service and luckily was permitted to have her little girl Pasha with her in the kitchen; the other children had been left in the native village with relatives. Pasha and her parents lived very poorly at St. Petersburg, but at least they did not starve and freeze, and Pasha was even sent to school. But when the girl was in the third standard, a new misfortune overtook the family: war broke out and Makushin was mobilized. Mad with rage at this new blow, Pasha's mother could not help giving vent to her feelings and stuck a knife into the eyes of the Tsar's portrait on the wall of her master's kitchen.

She was arrested, and after being kept under arrest for some time was sent out of St. Petersburg to her native village; here starvation faced them again, and twelve-year-old Pasha started to work on the fields of the rich farmers in the neighbourhood for a small pittance. After going through various trials, during which she lost both father and mother, Pasha in 1918 met, and later

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married, a young Red Army soldier, Sergei Pichugin. Her husband went back to the army to fight the "Whites," and as was the usual custom, his wife, Pasha, went to live with her husband's people. Here, as was also generally the case, she, together with her mother-in-law, sisters-in-law and other women of the family, were in complete subjection to the head of the family—her husband's father—a hard, tyrannical taskmaster, who would allow no breath of the new life to reach his hut and who treated his womenfolk simply like living chattels. But as the years rolled by, the new life, the political, social and economic rights of women did filtrate into the village, and Pasha, hearing about them, strove to understand.

Timidly, in spite of dark looks and scoffing, sometimes even blows, Pasha joined a women's section, which, under the leadership of the more progressive Communist women, sought to educate and emancipate women peasants and town workers. Soon she became a delegate, and subsequently in 1926, by the votes of the women, she was elected to the village Soviet. Pasha, though only semi-literate, was lucky in that, when her husband returned from the army, he sympathized with her strivings, and, unlike many of the peasant menfolk (especially of the older generation) who scoffed at "petticoat" government, he helped her all he could. Moreover, her work in the women's section and in the village Soviet was a refuge from her hard life at her father-in-law's home, from which not even her husband was able to emancipate her completely. Besides, her husband soon after had gone to Moscow, where he had taken up industrial work.

She was drawn more and more into social public activities and in 1929 she was elected chairman of her village Soviet; but the proffered position frightened her, she was afraid she would be unable to carry out her duties; and then she came to a decision—she took her two little girls and joined her husband in Moscow. To him she poured out her fears and difficulties, and here she found sympathy; he helped her to become fully literate, read with her, explained to her the Communist Party programme, the meaning of

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women's economic independence, and in 1931, with her husband's encouragement, she started to work (at first as an unskilled worker) in the construction of the Moscow Ball Bearings plant. Here, together with other peasant women, she learnt what it was to work with others on a big construction and learnt to value proletarian comradeship.

When the construction was finished, the hitherto unskilled women were instructed how to manufacture ball bearings, and Pasha was the first to put together a Soviet ball bearing; this was a red-letter day for her, and the second red-letter day in her life was when in 1932 she was admitted to membership of the Communist Party. At the works she made rapid progress, became forewoman, and for outstanding devotion to her work she was granted the Order of the Red Banner of Labour in 1933. At the same time she was extremely active in the party and became a popular successful propagandist. In 1935 she was elected to the Moscow Soviet (equivalent to the Municipal Council), where again she proved a most energetic, fruitful member. With all this she has remained a faithful, loving, attentive wife and mother.

True, she had had hopes of entering an industrial university, and even passed the entrance examination to the Industrial Academy brilliantly, but her work in the Soviets was too absorbing and too important and she gave up the idea of the university; she herself says that honest work in the Soviet gives you such a mass of experience of men and affairs that it has been a veritable university for her!

Lastly, she has been accorded the supreme honour of being elected to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. on the nomination of the Moscow Ball Bearing Works.

Undoubtedly this woman had much inborn intelligence and energy, but what would have become of this intelligence and energy had not the Soviet Revolution rescued her from the everyday miserable life of the pre-war poor peasant woman, whether as the servant of a rich landowner or kulak or as the wife of a poor small farmer or day labourer?

THE INTELLIGENTSIA

IN the early days of the revolution there was a widespread idea abroad—sedulously spread by a large section of the Press in most countries—that the Bolsheviks were barbarians, that they cared nothing for art, literature, dancing, music, etc. As we have shown in previous chapters, these false ideas were very soon exposed by numerous foreign visitors to Soviet Russia.

Many recent visitors also bear testimony to the falsity of this view—we may quote but one example. In his report of the Geological Congress from which we have quoted in an earlier chapter, Professor G. W. Tyrrell refers several times to the excellence of the local museums he visited in various parts of the U.S.S.R., and, for instance, says in regard to the Urals Geological Museum in Sverdlovsk: “The exhibits in this magnificent museum completely cover the geology, tectonics, petrology, mineralogy and ore deposits of the whole vast length of the Urals from the Arctic to the Caspian.”

However, even now there are many, both in Great Britain and other countries, who insist that there is no freedom of thought and expression by the intelligentsia, that original creative work is suppressed, that the intelligentsia has been and is oppressed, etc. How art, literature, science, the theatre, flourish (as they admittedly are doing in the U.S.S.R.) if the intelligentsia is given no freedom of expression, is rather a mystery; but let that pass.

In Tsarist Russia the theatre, literature and music, to a less extent also science, undoubtedly held a high place of honour among the nations of the world, but their fine creative work was reserved almost exclusively for the upper ten. The intelligentsia who could enjoy the great works of the masters was very small in number. How could the vast masses of illiterates enjoy the great works of the Russian poets, novelists, scientists? What opportunity had

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the masses of the workers crowded in the cellars and attics of the big towns to enjoy the fine acting and music of the Russian artistes in theatre, opera, or concert hall? Finally, what talent must have been ruthlessly crushed among the teeming, toiling masses of all the various nationalities who had no education and no outlet for the artistic, literary, and scientific abilities, which so many of them undoubtedly possess!

A section of the old intelligentsia, who were imbued through and through with the psychology of the upper classes whom they had served in Tsarist times, could not adapt themselves to the new conditions; they undoubtedly did suffer, just as the former factory and landed estate owners and merchants suffered when they were expropriated for the benefit of the whole people.

But though a part of the former intelligentsia suffered and were driven into exile, the intelligentsia as a body gained tremendously; in the first place, from the great development of education and the considerable reduction in the hours of work; from the fact that instead of being a small upper layer of the population serving in the main the wealthy exploiters of the people, the intelligentsia is becoming more and more numerous and the whole people have the ability and time and are eager to appreciate the work of the creative artists.

As A. Tolstoi so well said at the Second International Writers' Congress held in Madrid in July 1937: "The November Socialist Revolution flung the portals of art wide open to the whole people. To-day in the U.S.S.R. there are nearly 60,000,000 readers of belles-lettres. The opera, theatres, and cinemas serve the whole people . . . the broad masses of the peoples participate in the creation of art. It is becoming an integral part of the whole of creative life. It forms a considerable part of life. It is no longer a decoration, a diversion, or fruitless musing. Art is the record of the moral and physical conquests of the people. Art is knowledge, the highest school for the moulding of the human soul. Art is that mental atmosphere into which millions upon millions of the people are being drawn. . . ."

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The policy of the Soviet Government in regard to education is summed up very accurately in Article 121 of the New Constitution which reads: "Citizens of the U.S.S.R. have the right to education. This right is ensured by universal compulsory elementary education, by education being free of charge, including higher education, by the system of State stipends for the overwhelming majority of students in higher schools; by instruction in schools being given in the native languages and by the organization of free industrial, technical, and agronomic education for the toilers at the factories, State farms, machine and tractor stations, and collective farms."

One of the first tasks undertaken by the Soviet authorities was the stamping out of illiteracy. In Tsarist Russia about 79 per cent of the population were illiterate. Now, with the exception of a comparatively few old people and young children, there are very few illiterates, and universal compulsory elementary education has been established throughout the country.

The aim is to establish, throughout the Republic, schools with a ten-year course, i.e. for children and young persons from eight to eighteen years of age. There are already a large number of such schools in many urban and some rural areas. In other areas, urban and rural, there are what is called the incomplete secondary school, with a seven-year course for children from eight to the end of the fourteenth year. Children leaving these schools at the age of fifteen usually enter a factory workshop school until they are eighteen. There they receive three hours' general education and theoretical tuition in the particular trade or profession they choose, and three hours' practical work per day in workshops attached to the school.

The progress made by education may be illustrated with a few figures. Whereas as already pointed out, before the Revolution, there were a total of about 8,000,000 children attending school, of whom 823,000 attended secondary schools, in 1936-37, 27,611,000 children attended school in the U.S.S.R., of whom 16,641,000 were attending secondary schools. In addition, nearly 9,000,000 adults were attending various schools and courses.

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Since the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan, the number of new schools constructed has increased year by year, and during the four years 1933-36 a total of 16,725 new schools were constructed, of which 13,784 were erected in the rural areas of the Union. As for higher educational institutions, including universities, in 1914 there were 91 with 112,000 students; by 1937 there were 700 such institutions with 558,000 students. Already, by the end of the First Five-Year Plan, the Soviet intelligentsia (i.e. university and technical college graduates, doctors, scientists, expert engineers, technicians, agronomists, teachers, lawyers, etc.) numbered at least 2,700,000 persons, and although we have no definite figure, it is quite safe to assume that the number of the intelligentsia at the present time is over 5,000,000.

Molotov in a speech in May 1938 at a conference of professors and organizers of the Soviet higher educational institutions (universities, etc.) claimed that there were more students in such institutions in the U.S.S.R. than in those of Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Japan taken together.

With the stamping out of illiteracy and the growth in the number of the intelligentsia, it was only to be expected that the Press and book circulation should have gone up by leaps and bounds, and indeed, whilst in 1913 there were 859 newspapers (actually the number was less, since the frequent suppression of journals by the Tsarist authorities caused many papers to change their names and publishers' addresses sometimes several times a year), with a daily circulation of 2,729,000; in 1937 there were 8,521 newspapers with a daily circulation of 36,197,000.

Here is a quite normal item of information in the Soviet Press of December 29, 1937, e.g. that "among the workers of the Kirov factory (Leningrad) there has been an increase in subscribers for 1938, not only for daily papers and political journals, but also for scientific and literary and art journals. The workers also subscribe to German and French journals."

The number of books published in 1913 was 26,174, with a total circulation of 86,739,000 copies, but in 1937 the number of

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books published was 43,300, with a total circulation of 673,539,000 copies.

At the same time, institutions which serve both the intelligentsia and help the people generally to make use of the works of authors, artists, etc., show similar progress.

In 1914 there were 12,600 libraries; in 1936 there were 55,901 libraries. Clubs and cottage reading-rooms in 1914 numbered 134 in urban areas and 88 in rural areas, but in 1936 there were 17,175 clubs and cottage reading-rooms in urban areas, and 63,771 in the rural areas. Similarly, the number of theatres increased from 153 in 1914 to 697 in 1936, and the number of cinemas, including travelling cinemas, in 1936 was 29,758, as compared with 1,412 in 1914.

But it may be urged, conceding all this—the stamping out of illiteracy, the great increase in the Press and book circulation, and in the number of schools and universities, etc.—is it not true that the intelligentsia are hedged round with prohibitions, that they cannot give full rein to their creative abilities because they are not allowed to criticize the Soviet regime or to sing the praises of capitalism? To such limitations the intelligentsia in the U.S.S.R. are indeed subjected. Nothing is permitted to the intelligentsia or to anybody else which would endanger the peaceful progress of socialism or which might propagate any idea of the restoration of capitalism or landlordism—to what extent we approve this limitation depends, it seems to us, on the earnestness and determination with which we desire the final elimination of exploitation and the successful establishment of a classless socialist society.

Yes, there are limitations in the U.S.S.R. It may, of course, be pointed out that such limitations are also not unknown in other countries, even the democratic countries (there is no need to speak of the Fascist countries), when publishers refuse to publish and theatrical producers refuse to present books and plays which they may consider subversive or not worth while for other reasons. Nevertheless, in so far as Governments are powerless to suppress them, in so far as they are too widespread to be suppressed, in

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so far as Governments fear a freeing of the forces of revolution if they attempt to suppress them, opposition tendencies in the bourgeois democracies do find expression in the Press and on the platform, always, of course, subject to financial and other restrictions.

On the other hand, the Soviet author, scientist, musician, artist, is not subjected to the limitations imposed upon his work in other countries by reason of his own poverty or the poverty and ignorance of his public, which either cannot, or will not, buy great works of art or good books in sufficient numbers, and which cannot or will not flock to the theatre, opera, or concert hall when first-class works are presented.

In what other country does the author, scientist, artist, get so much assistance from the authorities, both moral and material, as in the U.S.S.R.? What other country can boast of such packed theatres, opera and concert halls when the best plays and music, both classic and modern, are presented? In what other country can authors boast such huge circulations of their books? In what other country is scientific research and exploration so vigorously organized and generously supported by the State as in the U.S.S.R.?

Yes, Soviet artists, scientists, authors, are expected to use their art and learning as a medium for ministering to the pleasure and for raising the culture of the masses and not as propaganda, direct or indirect, against the Soviets. Has this cramped their style?

Anyone who has visited the picture galleries and museums in the U.S.S.R. will agree that for care of the works of art and for intelligent arrangement they are amongst the best that can be seen anywhere.

All who have visited the theatres in the U.S.S.R. bear testimony to the high artistic level of their productions, certainly not inferior to that in other countries. How do the Soviet actors themselves feel? Here is what I. M. Moskvin, one of the most eminent actors, both in pre-revolutionary Russia and also now in the U.S.S.R., said, amongst other things, at a meeting of art workers in Moscow, December 25, 1936:

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“As you all probably know, I welcomed the proletarian Revolution joyfully. But when our old ways of life began to be broken up, when there came a complete revaluation of this life, I, philistine-like, ‘lay rather low,’ confused by it all. I lost my orientation since the bench upon which I had rested for forty-three years had been knocked from under me. I was unable to get out of this unhappy position very rapidly. For a long time I observed the Bolsheviks, trying to make up my mind what sort of people they were. The audiences at the theatre were a new, to me unfamiliar, class of people; they followed our plays extraordinarily silently, attentively, and reacted intelligently to them. Then there were concerts and plays in State and public institutions. Here I met and conversed with numerous party people, they were serious, not idle chatterers. . . . Then to our theatre came Lenin, who expressed great appreciation of our theatre. Gradually I crept out of the hiding hole into which I had withdrawn inwardly . . . I could not at one throw fling aside my habits and modes of thought of forty-three years’ standing, I still felt for a long time the weight of old traditions, the memory of my apparent well-being in the old days and my habit of indifference to the surrounding realities. . . .”

But after a close study of “the realities of present-day life, of the facts which demonstrated the yearnings of our people for knowledge, their courage and heroism, their continuous victory on the labour front . . . their elemental desire for culture and art,” he began to feel that “if one was not to close one’s eyes and ears to all this, one could no longer remain indifferent to it all. . . . Take but as an example the art of our national minorities,” he continued, “for centuries it lay buried unknown. But no sooner had the Bolsheviks come along than it was liberated, brought to light, and the whole world could learn what artistic heights a liberated people could attain. It was not until I had lived for sixty years that I became acquainted, for instance, with the splendid Kazakh theatre. . . .

“What sort of a workshop is this for which nothing is impossible

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—what sort of workers toil there? The master-workers—these are Stalin and the whole people of the U.S.S.R. . . .”

Finally, Moskvin called upon all theatrical artists to make the Soviet theatre worthy of the times in which they lived by observing closely the aim, ideas, and ideals of Soviet citizens, so as to reflect these in the theatre.

This extract illustrates the thoughts and feelings of a true artist of the old times who had to be “reborn” in order to appreciate what the new order meant; but certainly there is no question of any cramping of style or sterility.

Let us take another example in this field. Stanislavsky, the famous seventy-five-year-old actor-producer and founder of the Moscow Art Theatre, wrote on November 7, 1937, of how dull and uninteresting now seemed the old days of “society” life, “so full of empty ceremony, surface brilliance, and hypocrisy,” and after pointing out the difficulties which had been overcome by the Soviets he continued: “From the first days of the Great October (November) Revolution, the party and Government took upon themselves the care of the Soviet theatre, not only materially, but also ideologically, standing on guard of the truth and of the peoples’ interests, saving us from all false tendencies. It was precisely the party and Government that raised their voices against barren formalism and for real art. . . .

“The importance of art will become even greater in the future and that is why it is so important to train cadres of experienced producers, good actors, fine singers, splendid artists and dramatists, to all of which the Government devotes so much attention.

“My work with the young gives me particular pleasure. I am thus training the dramatic artists of the future. The rest of my time I am devoting to writing (about acting, etc.).

“What a delight it is to work for one’s people in close contact with them. This feeling is the result of the training which the Communist Party, with our dear beloved leader at its head, has given us. He deals with all vital questions so simply and sincerely and solves them so correctly and so well. Comrade Stalin is a real

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solicitous friend of all that is vital and progressive; he foresees everything. How much he has done for us actors—I thank him for all this."

Here again is a representative of one of the former subject nationalities. Gnat Yura, Art Director of the Franko Theatre, in the Ukraine, stated, in the course of an article: "Is it possible to draw a parallel between our bright present and the dark past? Who does not know the degrading history of the pre-revolutionary Ukrainian theatre, its vagrant existence, its humiliations at the hands of the Tsarist satraps? Who does not know that Ukrainian drama was in the past doomed to play the disgraceful role of an appendage to Russian vaudeville, with which the performances of Ukrainian artists began? In spite of these conditions, the Ukrainian theatre and drama displayed remarkable powers of resistance. The classic treasures of Ukrainian dramatic art have been preserved for the Ukrainian people and toilers of the whole Union.

"While in old Ukraine there was hardly a permanent Ukrainian theatre and only a few illegal vagrant troupes, at the present time free Soviet Ukraine has hundreds of permanent State, collective farm, club, and other theatres, thousands of cinema houses, palaces of culture, and many dramatic and art schools. Kiev alone has ten theatres, a large choir and a bandura orchestra, a female choir, and the famous Dumka capella of one hundred and fifty people.

"The Franko theatre, the origin of which coincides with the Soviets coming to power, has carried out extensive educational work in the Ukraine. At the time of its fifteenth anniversary the Government noted its successes by decorating me, as its art director from the very day of its inception, with the Order of the Red Banner. The theatre has produced plays of modern Russia and Ukrainian authors as well as Ukrainian and world classics."

Other Soviet actors and actresses have expressed similar enthusiasm for the conditions of work and life of Soviet artistes.

What about musicians—are they doomed to sterility by the Soviet regime? When one remembers how Soviet musicians have

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carried off practically all the first prizes in recent international contests, when one sees and reads of the numerous schools of music in which gifted children, as well as adults, irrespective of social, national, or racial origin, receive training free of charge, it seems rather absurd for anyone to talk of "sterility." It may be true that the work of the modern young Soviet composers is not up to the standard of the classics—Beethoven, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, etc.—but at any rate the works of young Soviet composers such as Dzerzhinsky, Zhelobinsky, Shoshtakhovich, Shaporin, and others, are certainly not inferior to the works of the modern composers of other countries.

What about literature? Is Soviet literature cramped and sterile? Again, judged in comparison with the modern literature of other countries, the works which have been published during the last twenty years by Sholokhov, A. Tolstoi, Erenburg, Ostrovsky (who died recently from an incurable illness at the age of thirty-two), Ivanov, Fadeyev, Kurneichuk, Seifulina, Olesha, Pogodin, and numerous others, will certainly lose nothing.

Admittedly, Soviet literature, like its music, painting, etc., has not yet reached the perfection of the best Russian and other classics, but when artists are endeavouring to express, interpret, or reflect in their art the philosophy, ideals, and psychology of a new civilization, the structure of which is necessarily still far from complete, twenty years is a very short time, particularly when five of these years were given up to a life-and-death struggle with home-grown and foreign enemies, and when the possibility of planning on a large scale of the new society only became possible ten years ago.

How do these Soviet writers, whose talents no one will deny, regard their conditions of work? For reasons of space we can only quote here a very few extracts from some of these writers.

When asked to stand as a candidate for the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., A. Tolstoi said: "To-day, when I listened to the words of young and remarkable people addressed to me, I decided to make a solemn promise to redouble my energy and write many

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more books for our Fatherland, for our people, for you, about our Fatherland, about you.

“Prior to our Soviet Revolution, only one system, the landlord-capitalist economy, prevailed in Russia and also in the entire world. I am not going to analyse it now, suffice it to say that this system brought upon the world the Imperialist war, in which 15 million people were killed. . . .

“To-day, Fascist Germany, Japan, and Italy are attempting with all the forces at their disposal to engineer a new world war. I was in the West and saw it with my own eyes. Our revolution established the socialist system, a new, entirely different system of national economy. Universal peace is required above all for the development of the socialist economy. Prosperity and happiness of the people, prosperity and happiness for each citizen, are the purpose and main task of socialist economy.

“‘Appetite comes with eating,’ says a Russian proverb. There are no limits and should be no limits and bounds to prosperity and happiness. This year we gathered a harvest of 7,000 million poods of grain. Well done for the current year, but we must have a still greater harvest in the future. We have eradicated illiteracy; all children, without exception, attend schools. This is not sufficient. Let us strive so that everyone shall receive a secondary education and later, that our entire youth shall receive a university education.

“In olden times people in the villages lived in dirt. You entered a hut and it would be full of bugs. ‘Why, grandmother, your house is full of bugs.’ . . . ‘That’s nothing, they’re our own’ . . . would be the answer.

“To-day electricity and radio have penetrated to the village. Homes are clean. Warm sheds for cattle have been built, orchards laid out, and hothouses constructed. This, however, is not enough. The village must become a rural city with asphalt roads, garages, beautiful spacious clubs, nurseries, large schools, and sports stadiums.

“Twenty years ago Germany was much stronger and more

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cultured than Tsarist landlord Russia. To-day Soviet Russia is not only stronger and mightier than Germany, but also than Japan and Italy thrown in for good measure. You might ask, 'and also more cultured?' Yes, more cultured, despite the fact that we have much to accomplish yet, many cultural habits have to be acquired. We still have to wage a merciless struggle against those hostile elements who attempt to hinder us. We are more cultured because the culture of a people consists in the problems and aims the people put before themselves. I maintain that our village teacher, who spends the night reading books, learning the great ideals of Soviet humanism, is far more cultured than the German professor delivering lectures on the superiority of the long skulls of the German race. . . ."

Sholokhov, on a similar occasion, declared: "A feeling of pride resounds in the speeches of candidates to the Supreme Soviet published in our Press, a pride evoked by the confidence placed by the people in their candidates. I also am imbued with this feeling, comrades. With me, however, this feeling of pride is mingled with a feeling of personal joy since I am being nominated for one of the Don electoral districts. I was born and bred on the Don, studied, became a man and writer, and developed as a member of our great Communist Party there.

"What have the Don Cossacks become during the years of Soviet power? Not only villages, but hamlets, almost every home has children studying in secondary schools. Cossack collective farmers no longer want their sons to know only how to till the soil. They wish to see their children become engineers, commanders of the Red Army, agronomists, physicians, teachers. A new Soviet Cossack intelligentsia is developing. The Don is being transformed; it is already a new Don. We are boldly and confidently marching to a bright future."

We might give many extracts from the writings and speeches of Soviet writers, all reflecting the same confidence in their Government, the same delight in their work, and optimism for the future of Soviet literature. We have no space for this, but one other

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quotation must be given showing the impression made by the U.S.S.R. on the veteran Russian writer, A. I. Kuprin, world famous as the author of *The Pit*, *The Duel*, *The Garnet Bracelet*, etc. Kuprin left Russia soon after the Soviet Revolution and only returned to the U.S.S.R. in the summer of 1937. We give his impressions on his return, almost in full, as they appeared in the Moscow Press (October 27, 1937), because in these few pages we have a picture of modern U.S.S.R. as it appears to an aged writer who had thought and seen much, both in pre-revolutionary Russia and abroad.

“What do I like most about the U.S.S.R.? During the years I spent far away from my native land, many palaces, factories, and cities have come into being here. There was nothing of this when I left Russia. But the most amazing of all that has come into being in this period, and the best that I have discovered in my native land are the people, the young people and the children of to-day.

“Moscow’s appearance has vastly improved. The sad law of life cannot be applied to Moscow—it grows older in years but younger and more beautiful in appearance. This pleased me particularly for I spent my childhood and youth in Moscow.

“There is the remarkably comfortable subway, with which no other subway in Europe can be compared. One feels as though one were in a crystal palace flooded with sunlight instead of being deep under the ground. You will not find such wide avenues abroad as there are in Moscow. On the whole, my native Moscow greeted me with exceptional charm and warmth.

“But, of course, the principal ‘sight’ of Moscow is the Moscovite himself. I have been touched by the greetings that have met me during my walks in Moscow. Someone passes me, saying briefly ‘Greetings, Kuprin!’ and hurries on. Who is he? How does he know me? Perhaps he had seen my photograph published in the newspapers on the day of my arrival and wishes to say ‘how do you do’ to the old writer who has returned from the outside world. This ‘Greetings, Kuprin,’ thrown to me in passing, sounds so simple and sincere.

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“In Alexander Square, where my wife and I sat down to rest on a bench, we were surrounded by a group of young boys and girls. Introducing themselves as my readers they started a conversation. And I had somehow thought that I was entirely unknown to the youth of the U.S.S.R. I was moved almost to tears.

“I went to see the colour film *Grunya Kornakova* in the Metropole Cinema. I confess that my eye wandered from the screen, for my attention was occupied with the public. I can say that what I liked best about *Grunya Kornakova* was the manner in which it was received by the public. What simple, straightforward merriment, what temperament! How warmly and wholeheartedly did the audience—mainly young people—respond to the events that were passing before them on the screen! What applause for the actors and producers! Sitting in the cinema, I was thinking how fine it would be if the Soviet youth would like my *Second Captain Rybnikov*! The theme of this story—the exposure of a Japanese spy who collected secret information in Petersburg during the Russo-Japanese War—is in tune with contemporary life and that is why I have permitted the Moscow studios to adapt the story for the cinema.

“Many young Soviet men and women were my guests this summer at Golytsino (a Moscow suburb). They were the children of my relatives and friends, grown up and matured during the years of my absence. I was astounded by their vitality and their cloudless spirit. These are born optimists. It even occurred to me that compared with the young people of the pre-revolutionary epoch they are different, freer, and more confident.

“And what love there is for Pushkin in the U.S.S.R.! He is read and reread. He has become a truly national poet. Here is an amazing and at the same time touching detail. In Golytsino one of our acquaintances, a woman collective farmer, gave birth to a son. She called him Alexander. When we asked her why she had chosen the name she replied she had named her son after Pushkin. Her husband’s name being Sergei, the son will therefore

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be called Alexander Sergeievich (which is the name and patronymic of Pushkin).

“The circumstances in which Alexander Sergeievich arrived are interesting in themselves. A maternity hospital was being built in Golytsino and was to be ready by August 15th. Alexander Sergeievich, however, decided to come into the world on August 14th. The future mother was taken by her relatives to the railway station, to be sent to the nearest hospital. It happened that the train at that time was a through train. Realizing that the woman was urgently in need of medical aid, the station-master stopped the train and she arrived at the hospital in time. Could a peasant woman in pre-revolutionary Russia ever dream that a train would be stopped solely for her sake and that of her future child?

“The Soviet children are a source of unending joy to me. I am delighted to see that the country devotes so much attention to them and that the Soviet Government displays such solicitude for expectant mothers. This is very wise. It is most important to take care of children, for in them is the future of the country. Solicitude for woman and her children gives her the moral strength to rear worthy citizens of the U.S.S.R.

“Golytsino greeted us with the multitone chorus of children’s voices. Several score kindergartens are situated in this most picturesque of Moscow suburbs. I have always been very fond of children and was highly pleased to find that they were my neighbours. Rising in the mornings I would go out on to our balcony and inform my wife that the ‘little magpies’ had already risen. Later, from our garden I would watch them walking by decorously in pairs, all plump, red-cheeked and smiling.

“Incidentally, what a beautiful conception—kindergarten. For it is indeed a garden! A garden where young souls flower.

“Along with the policemen, the preceptor, who was a sort of school gendarme, has also been relegated to the past. To-day it is even strange to recall the birch rod. The feeling of dignity is imbued in Soviet men and women from childhood. Those who have read my story *Cadets* will remember, perhaps, the hero

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Bulanov and how deeply he suffered from the undeserved, barbarous, outrageous punishment he received for some trifling prank. I was that Bulanov, and the memory of the birch rod in the cadet corps has remained with me all my life. . . .

“It is my fondest desire to write for the splendid youth and the enchanting Soviet children. I doubt only whether my health will permit me to take up my pen in the near future. In the meantime I am thinking of republishing my older works and publishing things written abroad. I should like greatly to publish a collection of my stories for children.

“I receive letters now from people I never knew before; they write with such warmth and cordiality as though we had been friends for years, in a friendship that had been interrupted but which has now been resumed. Some of them are my old readers. Others are young readers whose existence I had not even suspected. All of them are glad that I have at last returned to the U.S.S.R. My soul basks in the warmth of these unknown friends.

“The very flowers seem to smell differently in my native land. Their perfume is stronger, richer than the flowers abroad. They say our soil is juicier and more fertile. At any rate, everything is better in my native land!”

Science in Tsarist Russia, like literature and art, could boast some very eminent names—Mendeleev, Pavlov, Timiriazov, Lomonosov, Karpinsky—to name but a few; but whilst the scientific world knew of the great Russian scientists, the masses of the Russian people knew nothing of them or their work. They were like individual oases in a desert of ignorance and superstition. The State, as such, gave but little material or for that matter even moral support to these scientists and what they were enabled to accomplish they did more in spite of the lack of support and often even direct hindrance, than because of any help they received from the State.

As an example of this, one may recall the case of the eminent horticulturist, the late I. V. Michurin, whose scientific work was hampered at every step by the Tsarist authorities and who, accord-

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ing to his own statements, although he was an old man when the Revolution came, was able to accomplish more since 1917 than he had done in all his life up to that year.

The Soviet Government understood from the very first the importance of scientific development and of making science accessible to the masses of the people. This they regarded as necessary both from the point of view of the practical importance of science for the industrial and agricultural development of the country and from that of its influence in raising the educational and cultural level of the people. To quote Professor Tyrrell once again:

“Soviet Russia, as is well known, founds its economy and its philosophy on Science; but the intensity of the interest in Science manifested by nearly everyone, high or low, with whom Congressists came into contact, had to be experienced to be believed. Over the entrance to every mine, quarry or institution that we visited, and at the principal railway stations, there was almost invariably a large strip of red bunting on which was inscribed, beside the inevitable and cordial sentence of welcome, a quotation from a speech by Stalin: ‘Science is called Science just because it recognizes no fetishes, and does not fear to raise its hand against everything that is obsolete and antiquated, and listens attentively to the voices of experience and practice.’ . . .

“The flood of energy and scientific enterprise released by the Revolution has led to a vast expansion of this goldfield (Beresovsk), and its production has increased fourfold in the last twenty years. The gold is found in scores of thousands of thin, closely-spaced, quartz veins which occur over an area of 64 square kilometres. Beresovsk is a typical mining township of rough wooden dwellings, with the new wooden superstructures of the mine shafts towering high above them, and roads as unbelievably bad as are to be found anywhere in the U.S.S.R. We were first shown through the local mining museum exhibiting specimens of the rocks, minerals, and ores, maps, mine plans, and a pictorial history of the field, very well done and splendidly housed as all these local museums are.

“At almost every stop crowds of country people flocked to see

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us, and to talk to us through the interpreters. Many of them showed a surprising knowledge of, and talked with great intelligence about, the local mineral deposits, and this was specially noticeable in the Mongolian autonomous district of Khakassk."

And finally one more quotation from Professor Tyrrell's very interesting report:

"After visiting the great Kukisvumchorr apatite mine, and the neighbouring newly-prospected Yukspor mine, I regard their development in eight short years, entirely by Russian energy and initiative, as one of the industrial wonders of the world. A mountain-side has been blasted away to a height of 1,500 feet, exposing an enormous face of the shining white mineral cut back into four or five broad ledges. Up and down these workings we traileid by means of dizzy ladders of wooden stairs with handrails, but feeling no fatigue because of the sustained interest of the rock and mineral rarities we encountered on every hand. We were then taken through the underground workings, of which there are now over twenty miles, consisting of galleries seven feet high, electrically lit, and with electric haulage. These workings are on four communicating levels, with many inclined shafts down which the ore is tipped, we could not imagine where. However, we soon understood, for we were conducted down endless wooden stairs until we arrived at valley level, and here there was a great horseshoe-shaped concrete tunnel of such size that the ordinary railway engine and freight train could penetrate to the heart of the mountain. The trucks pass under automatic hoppers which load 400 tons in ten minutes. Fifteen of these trains, shipping 6,000 tons of ore, are loaded every day, bringing the production to more than two million tons a year."

Not only has science been made accessible to every worker and peasant; not only is science being developed and popularized in universities and colleges and in village hut laboratories, but the sharp division between "pure" and applied science is being obliterated. In no country in the world have the scientific discoverers of new facts and theories such a field for testing them and for

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applying them for the good of mankind as in the U.S.S.R.—and are they cramped in their work? Hear what N. V. Tsitsin, a noted agronomist, had to say on this subject when speaking at a meeting of Kolkhoz farmers at Lozhrikov (Omsk) and neighbouring villages.

After relating how he had been led in 1927, following a talk with Michurin (the horticulturist) to seek to cross wheat with a more hardy wild plant of the wheat family in order to obtain a kind of wheat which could withstand both cold and drought, he continued: "For some years I was unsuccessful, but in 1930 I obtained the first few seeds of a hybrid of wheat and wheat grass—I then began to work on this problem with even greater energy. . . . I made bold to place the problem before my fellow agronomists and research workers. But they only laughed at me and called me an ignoramus, some even accused me of being a mere adventurer. However, I did not lose courage for I felt I had the sympathy and support of the Party. . . . Nevertheless, I went through a difficult and unpleasant time until on December 31, 1935, I met Comrade Stalin at the Kremlin. I told him of my work in detail, and after he had listened attentively and asked me a number of questions, he said: "Go on with your experiments boldly; we shall give you every support."

Thus encouraged, Tsitsin continued his experiments and in November 1937 he and his assistants had a quarter of a ton of a hardy annual wheat which withstands both cold and drought, gives excellent harvests, and is not subject to some of the diseases to which ordinary wheat is subject. They had in their institute at Omsk four hectares under this wheat. They had also sent the seeds of the new wheat for experimental sowing in the Kolkhozy of their district. Tsitsin further described his successful work in the production of a hardy perennial wheat and his experiments with other cultures, all of which showed a freedom and scale of research work which many an agronomist in other countries might well envy.

Another well-known young Soviet agronomist, T. D. Lysenko,

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who has done much interesting and important work on vernalization, hybridization, etc., has drawn attention many times not only to the great help given to scientists generally and him in particular by the Government, but also how important is the assistance agronomists get from collective farmers, particularly Stakhanovites, who, studying the nature of the soil and modern technique, boldly try out new ways and means of raising harvests, etc., and have thus given scientists themselves many an interesting idea.

On November 7, 1937, for instance, Lysenko wrote: "One of the most splendid things about our country is the fact that such numbers of people, from the many thousand collective farmers in their cottage laboratories to research workers of institutes and academies, are mastering science. The time has long passed since it was necessary to compare our successes in research work with those of Tsarist Russia. Beyond any doubt, we now occupy one of the leading places in the world in many fields of agricultural science.

"The opportunities for scientific work are limitless in our country. We scientists have been given marvellous conditions for work; splendid institutes have been built for us and our tasks are on that grand scale which only socialist construction is able to give.

"We are changing the nature of plants, and this is being done, not only by small groups of scientists, but hundreds of scientists, thousands of agricultural experts, and tens of thousands of collective farm cottage laboratories are aiding in the task. The problem of a real alteration in the nature of plants will be solved only by Soviet science. An earnest of this is the tremendous support and help we receive from the Soviet Government, from the Party of Lenin-Stalin and personally from Stalin himself, who inspires millions of people to joyful labour and creative effort."

This is borne out by Professor Tyrrell who, in the course of the report referred to earlier, also described agricultural stations he visited and says:

"On the Northern Excursion we spent a morning on the State

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farm at Apatity, near Kirovsk, in the Kola Peninsula. This really impressed us very much, for it cannot have been organized as a show place for casual visitors, of which few, if any, are allowed in this new mining region. The farm employs five hundred and fifty workers, men and women, who are housed in good wooden-frame dwellings well grouped around a central rectangle of gardens. The school, the finest building in the place, was brick-built and faced with white and yellow plaster. For the nine hundred cows there were clean and comfortable byres with dry peat bedding. The cattle, of course, were in the fields, and I noted Galloways and Ayrshires among them. The fields represent a clearing in the forest swamp and, with their cows, hayricks, grain, potato, and cabbage cultivation, look exactly like a bit of Ayrshire or Fife transported into the Arctic."

He describes the way in which cabbages, cucumbers, potatoes, beetroot, onions, radishes, strawberries, tomatoes, as well as barley and grass for fodder have been made to give good yields here and adds:

"Plant research designed to find out what strains of grain, fruit, and vegetables are best adapted to climatic and other conditions under which they are grown takes place in scores of institutes, agricultural stations, and experimental farms. I saw two of these research stations, one at Kirovsk, which is having considerable success with vegetables in this high northern latitude, and an experimental fruit farm at Minussinsk in south central Siberia."

Other sciences—chemistry, physics, biology, geology, the social sciences, the history of culture and of language, political economy, etc. etc.—have received no less encouragement. In the course of a New Year's message on December 31, 1936, Professor V. L. Komarov, President of the Academy of Science, stated: "Soviet science has already won world distinction in such fields as geology, with its new methods of searching for useful minerals and calculating their supplies; geophysics, with its gravimetric, seismic, electrical methods of investigation; the physiology of man, and so on. The same sort of striking development is ensured in all

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fields of Soviet science. A pledge of that is the exceptionally favourable conditions which have been given scientists in our country."

In 1937, the Academy of Science alone had 4,000 research workers, as compared with only 96 in 1917, and if the research workers in institutes, schools, and colleges other than those of the academy be included, research workers in the U.S.S.R. number about 40,000. There are some 2,265 research institutes in the U.S.S.R. as compared with 212 in 1918.

The eminent physicist Professor A. J. Joffe, in the course of an article November 7, 1937, declared: "Physics was one of the first of the sciences to feel the beneficial effect of the great Socialist Revolution. The Leningrad Physico-Technical Institute and the Optical Institute, founded as early as 1918, drew all the city's physicists to their staffs. The physico-technical department of the Polytechnical Institute was created in 1919.

"In 1923 the physico-technical laboratory of the Supreme Council of National Economy was established. From this institution later sprang the Electro-Physical, Thermotechnical, Physical Chemistry, Remote Control, Television and Musical Acoustics institutes, and the Laboratory of Electrotechnical Materials.

"In one city, Leningrad, five large physics institutes and ten institutes of applied physics have been founded in the twenty years of Soviet power. Physicists in Moscow have grouped themselves about the Institute of Bio-physics and the Physics Institute of the university.

"Physico-technical institutes have been established also in Kharkov, Tomsk, Dniepropetrovsk, Sverdlovsk, Kiev, Gorky, Odessa, and other cities. The number of physicists is ten times as large as before the Revolution.

"But the difference between Soviet and pre-revolutionary physics is not only one of quantity. In no less than twenty problems occupying the attention of world physics, Soviet science is taking a significant and sometimes a leading part. Particular mention must be made of the very extensive development of applied physics, which was entirely neglected in Tsarist Russia. Soviet physics has

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played a leading role in attacking such practical problems as electrical properties and many others.

“Among the very solid contributions of Soviet physics to world science are the X-ray method of detecting crystal deformations, the study of currents in dielectrics (non-conductors), studies in the field of electrical and heat breakdowns of insulation. Much progress has been made in the development of technical physics. Nevertheless, despite the fact that physics is one of the most important sectors of the scientific front, Soviet physics still lags behind our rapidly developing industry. Our task is to catch up with industry’s progress and to take a leading place in world physics.”

It may be added that when Professor Kapitza was required to conduct his physico-chemical researches in Moscow instead of at Cambridge, a special laboratory with all the necessary equipment in no way inferior to that which he had at Cambridge, was built for him, and everything possible was done to ensure first-class conditions of life and work for him.

In a speech, December 17, 1937, thanking the Government for having done him the high honour of awarding him the Red Banner of Labour, Professor A. I. Kablukov, the noted physicist and mathematician, said: “The great October Revolution carried out under the direction of Lenin and his friend and comrade Stalin has opened wide the doors of the universities and technical colleges for the worker and peasant youth, and we old professors cannot but thank the Soviet Government for this.

“Observing the attentiveness and eagerness with which present-day youth—many coming from the most out of the way parts of the U.S.S.R.—follows lectures and works in the laboratories, we are involuntarily infected with its energy, forget our age and begin to feel still sufficiently strong to serve our dear Fatherland. We are very conscious of the attention which the Soviet Government devotes to the progress of science and their consideration for us scientists.”

An immense quantity of geological prospecting and research has been carried out by Soviet scientists during the last twenty

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years. Suffice it to say here that, apart from their deep scientific value, these researches have increased enormously the known mineral resources of the U.S.S.R., and also the exploitation of minerals.

Particularly interesting are the investigations made in the Kola peninsula where immense deposits of apatite, copper, nickel, titanium, and other important ores have been discovered. The peninsula has been developed industrially with the result that, amongst other things, its population has increased during the last few years from 8,000 to over 260,000.

Similar explorations in the Urals have led to the discovery there of extensive deposits of tin, tungsten, and various rare metals. In the course of an interview on this subject in the Soviet Press, December 1936, Professor Fersman, amongst other things, said: "The numerous exploration and prospecting expeditions organized by Soviet geologists in recent years, and especially this year, have confirmed that the Ural mountain range begins in the Arctic Ocean in the vicinity of Novaya Zemlya, passes through the whole of the Urals, is hidden in the sands of Central Asia and appears again in the form of an arch at Tian-Shan and Fergan (Central Asia).

"The Ural range thus stretches for almost 6,000 km., and consists of what is known as the Southern Urals and the Western Belt, in which are to be found rich deposits of potash and other salts as well as oil. On the other side, the eastern part of the Urals is hidden under the lowlands of Western Siberia, beneath the surface of which geophysicists have discovered buried rock formations stretching to Irtysh. In the southern districts they come out on the surface in the form of rich deposits of copper, lead, and rare metal ores."

Perhaps in a class apart may be considered Soviet exploration of the Arctic—we dealt with this subject briefly in an earlier chapter in connection with the organization of the North Sea route—here we would only give a few quotations from the famous explorer and scientist, Professor O. Y. Schmidt, which illustrate what he thinks of the possibilities and conditions of scientific work

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in the U.S.S.R. In an article dealing with the organization of the Polar Station on an ice floe at the North Pole, Professor Schmidt said: "The work of Soviet Polar explorers has always been noted not only for its extensive scale, but also by the fact that it has been firmly based on principle. We are not concerned with record breaking or the attainment of superficial effects. We are studying the Arctic with a view to mastering it; we are not out for sensation: our aim is to do what is important and necessary in the interests of science and in mastering the forces of nature. We make records from time to time, but only as by-products. . . .

"The socialist nature of our social structure has clearly revealed itself in all our work for the conquest of the North. The Polar explorers of capitalist countries, often remarkably gifted, talented, and courageous men, revealed in full how capitalist society limited their efforts. To obtain the means for their work they had to depend on so-called private initiative. In the majority of cases this meant that they had to devote their efforts to other than scientific aims. The newspaper magnates, cinema companies, etc., who helped financially wanted sensations. But even then their means were pretty inadequate, with the result that the efforts of the explorers were often paralysed and the possible results were limited.

"In the Soviet Union, on the contrary, powerful support by the State is given to the exploration of the North, because the conquest of the North is part of the great plan of socialist construction, because in our country exceptional conditions have been created for the advance of science.

"The Communist Party and the Soviet Government warmly supported and directed the work in the North and provided the possibility to carry out that work on a higher level in comparison with the previous work. This new, Soviet, level of Arctic exploration is characterized by the fact that it is carefully planned and by the concentration of all the work in the Arctic in a single centre in the form of a special Government Department, the Northern Sea Route Administration, organized on the initiative of Comrade Stalin."

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It remains to recall the fact that the Soviet North Pole Scientific Station set up on May 21, 1937, manned by I. D. Papanin, E. T. Krenkel, P. P. Shirshov, and K. Feodorov, spent nine months on the drifting ice-floe, from which they were taken off by Soviet ice-breakers on February 19, 1938, at the East Coast of Greenland $70^{\circ} 54' N.$ Lat. and $19^{\circ} 48' W.$ Long. after having drifted South over 1,650 miles.

During the whole of the nine months, no matter what the weather and perils to which they were subjected, the heroic four carried out extremely valuable scientific observations, many of which they made known by radio as they went along. The full value of their work will, of course, only be realized when the extensive notes of their observations will have been subjected to detailed study and systematization.

It may, however, already be stated that the North Pole scientists have gathered valuable material regarding the laws regulating the interflow of the cold Polar with the warmer Atlantic waters. They have also collected much material on the force of gravity, earth magnetism, the existence of living creatures in the neighbourhood of the North Pole and at varying depths of the waters of the Polar Basin, etc. The daily weather reports issued by the scientists during the nine months are of the greatest practical importance, particularly for air navigation.

And so we might review all the other branches of science in which Soviet work has assumed an amplitude wholly unknown in Russia before the Revolution, and which in many respects is now second to none in the world. Whatever may be said of Soviet science, one thing is certain—neither in means, men, or conditions of work is it in any way cramped, nor are its results sterile.

Lenin said in 1917 that the Bolsheviks had a wonderful weapon in their hands for the government of the State, namely, they could increase their State apparatus tenfold by drawing the masses of the people into participating in the day-to-day work of governing the State (this was ensured by the nature of the Soviet Constitution from the first); we would add that this weapon, the bringing of

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the masses of the people to appreciate and participate in scientific research is proving equally wonderful and effective in assisting the development of science.

Finally, we should like to refer briefly here to the alternative accusation made against the Soviets that the intelligentsia—writers, scientific experts, artists—are getting enormously high salaries and are forming a new class.

First, let us correct the idea of the formation of a new class. Whatever salaries writers and others may be getting for their work, this can never make them into an exploiting class, since whilst with their high salaries they may enjoy all sorts of comforts, Soviet law and economic organization prohibits and prevents them from using their money to earn more money by the exploitation of other people's labour power, and they can therefore never build up fortunes upon which their children could live idle and useless lives; although they may inherit some of the money earned by their parents, this would never be sufficient for them to live in permanent idleness. The intelligentsia only forms a section of the population, not a class, and this section is becoming larger and larger with the spread of educational opportunities.

It is, of course, perfectly true that writers, artists, musicians, and generally intellectual workers earn, as a rule, more than manual workers (although in many cases Stakhanovites of field and factory are now earning as much as, if not more than, any intellectual worker). The Soviet authorities are naturally anxious that its intelligentsia should have the best conditions to produce the best possible work, and also to attract talent to undertake such work. Until the productive forces have developed to such an extent as to make it possible for all to live an equally comfortable and well-to-do life (varying of course with the tastes and desires of the individual) there must be a differentiation in the remuneration of intellectual and physical labour. So long as there is an insufficiency of skilled workers and the old individualist psychology has not yet been supplanted by the new higher Socialist psychology, skilled workers and experts must be paid better than unskilled, and the

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higher the skill or the more efficient and educated the expert, the greater the output, the better the pay. The aim, of course, is to do away with any difference in pay between intellectual and manual labour. As the productive forces increase and the habits and psychology of the people change therewith, so the principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work," will be substituted by the higher principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

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“A PRISON of the nations”—that is what Lenin called Tsarist Russia, and as we have seen in previous chapters this was an extremely apt description.

Many nationalities, more particularly the Jews, were allowed to settle only in prescribed areas—the so-called “pales.” Great Russians, the dominant race in Tsarist Russia, could settle anywhere. The only official language was Russian, every endeavour was made to stamp out the national languages and culture of the numerous peoples inhabiting the Tsarist Empire. The only publications and schools conducted in the languages of the national minorities were religious publications and schools. Of the eleven Republics which now constitute the U.S.S.R., only three, the R.S.F.S.R., the Ukraine, and Georgia, had universities. The masses of the national minorities had practically no access even to elementary education, still less to secondary or higher education.

The Tsarist autocracy here over-reached itself. Its aim was to stamp out the national languages and culture; but by failing to provide even elementary education in Russian, the native tongues were kept alive by successive generations of the young who could not but learn it from their elders and who had practically no means, even had they wished it, to learn Russian. Thus, the language and the folk lore of the native races were handed on by word of mouth from generation to generation and survived in spite of all the efforts of the Tsarist authorities to stamp them out. How much more clever were the British imperialists in Ireland. By instituting compulsory elementary education they achieved the stamping out of the native Irish tongue so effectively that it is now requiring endless efforts on the part of the Government of Eire to revive it.

Economically, the picture was the same. The rich in cotton and wool areas of Turkestan and Uzbekistan, the rich in a variety of

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metals and coal areas of Kazakhstan and the Caucasus were left undeveloped economically and used merely as sources of raw materials—grown or extracted in the most primitive way—to feed the industries in Central Russia, in spite of the inconvenience and waste of transporting them across such huge distances. There were practically no health services, very few hospitals and doctors in the areas of the national minorities, the housing was deplorable, the natives died in their thousands from all kinds of diseases.

The areas of the national minorities were kept backward deliberately in order to prevent the rise of a native working-class and to keep them in economic and political subjection to the great Russian landowners, merchants, and manufacturers.

To detract attention from their real oppressors, the Tsarist Government and its local officials did everything possible to fan hostility between the various nationalities; the pogroms organized against the Jews; the constant feuds between the nationalities in Transcaucasia, the Georgians, Armenians, and Azerbaijans; the Cossacks against the native races in the Don Cossack districts, etc., are only too well known.

The coming to power of the Soviets changed all this. The aim of Socialism, the establishment of a classless society, of peace and friendship amongst the nations, the substitution of co-operation for the good of all, for the heartless and soulless competition for private gain, the principle of equal opportunity and freedom for all peoples to use their own language and to develop their own national culture, the complete cessation of the Russification and oppression of the national minorities—these were the ideals and principles which guided Soviet policy towards the nearly two hundred different nationalities inhabiting the U.S.S.R.

Unlike the Tsarist authorities, the Soviet leaders were not only not afraid of the rise of native industries, but they welcomed and encouraged such developments, for they knew full well that only in this way could the national minorities be led along the path of progress towards civilization, i.e. towards real civilization—Socialist civilization. In addition, the natural resources of the

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various outlying areas of the Union were needed for the development of the whole country, to defend it from foreign foes and to raise the standard of life of all the peoples.

In regard to her natural resources, her forest lands, her huge stretches of fertile soil and her water power, the U.S.S.R. occupies first place in the world. These resources were, comparatively, scarcely tapped in Tsarist Russia, and almost from the first days of its existence, the Soviet Government set about studying these resources; they sent out scientific expeditions to all parts of the country where rich deposits were known to exist or suspected, or where the possibility of cultivation of hitherto uncultivated land presented itself.

The various national Republics have been brought nearer to one another and to the centre of the U.S.S.R. by the building of railways. Some 3,612 kilometres of permanent way has been laid across Kazakhstan alone during the last twenty years, the railways carrying, in addition to passengers, also coal, ores, oil, cotton, tea, grain, hides, machinery, and other manufactures to and from the Republics; in addition there are air lines in these areas where in Tsarist times the only means of communication had been the camel or the mule. It is a notable fact that more goods of all kinds arrived in the Ukraine by rail in 1936 than the total received at all stations in Tsarist Russia in 1913. The goods carried by the Ukraine railways in 1936 were nearly three times that in 1913, and 2,018 kilometres of railway line have been built in that Republic since 1918.

On the White Russian railways the goods carried were four times that in 1913; in Turkmenistan, over five times; in Uzbekistan, nearly four times; in Tadzhikistan, about eight times that in 1913. In the Kirghiz, which had no railway lines at all in pre-war Russia, 155 kilometres of track were laid and in 1936 some 2,365,000 tons of goods transported along them.

Among the most important industrial constructions in the national Republics may be mentioned huge textile works in Uzbekistan; non-ferrous metal works in Kazakhstan; oil wells in

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Bashkiria and Kazakhstan; meat packing and fish, fruit and other canning works, tobacco, sugar, and other food factories in Armenia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tadzhikistan. In Georgia and Azerbaijan numerous new oil wells have been sunk; oil refineries, paper, chemical, and other works erected.

Electrical stations have been constructed in all the eleven Republics of the Union, at first to the astonishment and then to the delight of the inhabitants. The stations have been particularly developed since 1928. In 1936, the electrical energy produced in the R.S.F.S.R. was 6·6 times that in 1928; in the Ukraine it was 6·9 times; in White Russia, 9·9 times; in Azerbaijan, 3·4 times; in Georgia, 10·4 times; in Armenia, 7·6 times; Turkmenistan, 4·8 times; in Uzbekistan, 6·8 times; *Kazakhstan, 31·3 times; in the Kirghiz Republic, 31·3 times that in 1928.* In Tadzhikistan no electrical energy had been produced in 1928, but in 1936, the amount produced was 18,000,000 kilowatt hours.

Calculated at 1926-27 prices throughout, the industrial output in the R.S.F.S.R. in 1936 was 7·8 times that in 1913; in the Ukraine, it was 6·9 times; in White Russia, 15·9 times; Azerbaijan, 5·4 times; Kazakhstan, 11·8 times; Armenia, 12·0 times; Turkmenistan, 7·1 times, Uzbekistan, 4·4 times; *Tadzhikistan, 116·0 times; Georgia, 18·6 times, and in the Kirghiz Republic, 95·0 times that in 1913.*

The same story can be told regarding agriculture. The various national Republics have had the whole-hearted assistance of the Central Soviet authorities in the establishment of collective farms, in the substitution of the primitive methods of working the soil by modern technique, in the organization of machine tractor stations for the supply of tractors and other agricultural machinery, the supply of fertilizers, etc. At the beginning of 1937, on the fields of White Russia, 8,000 tractors were at work; in Azerbaijan, 4,600; in the Kirghiz Republic, 3,800; in Uzbekistan, 18,400; in Kazakhstan, 22,100; in the Ukraine, 81,300, and so on.

Many of the Nomad tribes in the Eastern outlying parts of the U.S.S.R. have been won over by sympathetic help and advice to

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a settled existence and have organized not only cattle-raising collective farms, but for the first time in their lives have also gone in for land cultivation, the raising of wheat and other important cereals.

A higher industrial and agricultural technique requires a higher cultural level of the people; indeed, the two must go hand in hand if the people are their own masters and not merely used by a possessing class as, in the main, unskilled adjuncts to their machines. The comparatively small number of experts and skilled workers employed are, in most capitalist colonies, mainly not of native origin.

Accordingly we find that in education the national minorities in the U.S.S.R. have made, if anything, even more remarkable progress than in their economic development. The number of pupils in the elementary and secondary schools of the U.S.S.R., as a whole, in 1936-37, was 3·5 times as many as those in pre-war days, whilst in the secondary schools alone the number of pupils in 1936-37 was 20·2 times as many. But in Azerbaijan the number of pupils in the elementary and secondary schools has increased from 72,000 in 1914-15 to 549,000 or 7·6 times in 1936-37, the number attending secondary schools has increased from 11,000 in 1914-15 to 380,000 or 34·5 times in 1936-37. In Armenia, the increase of pupils in both elementary and secondary schools has been from 34,000 to 242,000 or 7·1 times, whilst those in the secondary schools alone have increased from 3,000 to 204,000 or 68 times; in Turkmenistan, the increase of pupils in both elementary and secondary schools has been 7,000 to 161,000 or 23 times and in secondary schools alone from 2,000 to 74,000 or 37 times; in Uzbekistan, the increase in the number of pupils in both elementary and secondary schools has been from 16,000 to 791,000 or 49·4 times, and in secondary schools alone from 6,000 to 319,000 or 53·2 times; in Kazakhstan, from 105,000 to 930,000 or 8·9 times and in secondary schools alone from 9,000 to 431,000 or 47·9 times. In Kirghiz, the increase of pupils in both elementary and secondary schools has been from 7,000 to 227,000 or 32·4

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times and in secondary schools alone from 500 to 86,000 or 172 times. In Tadzhikistan, the increase of pupils in both elementary and secondary schools has been from 400 to 199,000 or 497·5 times. There were no secondary schools in Tadzhikistan prior to the Revolution, now there are 22,000 pupils in Tadzhik secondary schools.

There were, of course, very few literates among the national minorities of the Tsarist Empire; in many areas the only literates were the clergy and Russian officials and their children, who made up the bulk of those attending such schools as there were in these backward areas. Now, taking the U.S.S.R. as a whole, well over 90 per cent of the population is literate and amongst the national minorities the proportion of literates is about 80 per cent.

The Kirghiz Republic now boasts three higher educational institutions (universities and technical colleges). Turkmenistan and Tadzhikistan have four each. Armenia 8, Azerbaijan 10, Kazakhstan 12, White Russia 19, Uzbekistan 26.

Georgia, which before the war had one university with 300 students, now has 17 universities with 21,300 students. Before the Revolution the total annual expenditure on education in Georgia was some 200,000 roubles, in 1936 expenditure on education in Georgia amounted to 320,000,000 roubles.

In the Ukraine before the Revolution there were 15 higher educational institutions, now there are 117; the number of students in the higher educational institutions in the Ukraine considerably exceeds that in Germany, in spite of the fact that the latter has twice the population.

Over the whole of the R.S.F.S.R., by far the largest of the Republics constituting the Union, there are now 362 higher educational institutions, attended not only by Great Russians who constitute four-fifths of the population of this Republic, but also by the national minorities inhabiting various parts of it, whereas, before the war, on the same territory there were only 73 higher educational institutions mostly attended by Great Russians alone.

The result of all these new educational facilities is that throughout

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the U.S.S.R., including the former most backward nationalities, there are hundreds of thousands of native Soviet experts in all branches of the national economy.

Side by side with the stamping out of illiteracy, many nationalities have been helped to evolve a written language for the first time; in other cases, alphabets which were extremely difficult and complicated have been modernized and thus made accessible to the masses. There has been an enormous expansion in the Press and book publications. In 1913 throughout the Russian Empire there were 775 newspapers in the Russian language and 84 in various other languages, with a total circulation (Russian and other languages) of 2,729,000. In 1936 there were 6,285 newspapers published in the Russian language with a circulation of 27,516,000 and 2,965 newspapers in 69 different tongues of the minorities with a circulation of 10,455,000. When it is recalled that over 50 per cent of the inhabitants of the U.S.S.R. are Great Russians and many of the other nationalities can also read and speak Russian, it cannot but be admitted that the relative number and circulation of journals in the U.S.S.R. is very fair.

Book publication shows a similar picture; in 1913, 23,805 different books were published in Russian in the Tsarist Empire, with a total circulation of 80,218,000 and 2,369 books in languages other than Russian with a circulation of 6,521,000. In 1936 the number of books published in Russian was 31,652 with a total circulation of 438,220,000, whilst 11,696 books with a total circulation of 132,851,000 were published in 110 different native tongues. The same is true for other cultural institutions—the theatre, cinema, libraries, clubs, etc. For instance, the total number of theatres in Tsarist Russia in 1913 was 153, of which 107 were in the territory now covered by the R.S.F.S.R., and 35 in the Ukraine; in 1936 there were 697 theatres in the U.S.S.R. of which 446 were in the R.S.F.S.R. (many of them in the various native tongues), and 83 in the Ukraine. Armenia, Turkmenistan, Tadzhikistan, and Kirghisia had no theatres at all in 1914, now Soviet Armenia has 17 in its own language; Turkmenistan 8; Tadzhikistan 6; Kirghisia 5;

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Kazakhstan had two theatres in 1914, now it has 26; Uzbekistan had one, now it has 37; Azerbaijan had two, now it has 14; White Russia had three, now it has 15; Georgia had three, now it has 40. The theatres are now conducted in forty-five different languages. In addition to these professional theatres, there are numerous amateur groups which are assisted by the authorities in many ways.

From time to time exhibitions and festivals of the arts (painting, music, dancing, the theatre, etc.) of the various nationalities are held in Moscow and other towns of the U.S.S.R. These form excellent illustrations of the great cultural progress they have made during the last twenty years.

To illustrate the change which has taken place in the conditions and mentality of the various nationalities we give a very few definite examples which, as in a previous chapter, we have taken from the Soviet Press and chosen because we know them to be characteristic of thousands of similar cases which may be found amongst all the national minorities in the U.S.S.R.

First, as regards the Jews. We cannot deal here at length with the solution of the Jewish question in the U.S.S.R., suffice it to say that the Jews, like other nationalities, have equal rights and duties.

In Tsarist days only a very small proportion of the total places available in the universities were permitted to be taken by Jewish students, and if the percentage of Jews in a college had reached the maximum, a Jewish student, however capable, however brilliant, was forced to remain outside its portals. Now Jews can enter the schools and universities and all the liberal professions; they can settle on the land, and may, and many of them of course do, enter various Kolkhozy on a complete equality with other Soviet citizens.

In order to give them an opportunity to develop their own language and national culture, they have been assigned Birobijn as a Jewish autonomous province, where Yiddish is the official language in which the schools and public life is conducted. They are at liberty, and have taken the opportunity, to organize theatres

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in their own tongue, and by general agreement some of the finest acting in the U.S.S.R. can be seen in the Moscow Jewish State theatre, which presents in Yiddish not only plays written by Jewish dramatists, but also Yiddish translations of the best Russian and foreign dramatists, both modern and classic, including Shakespeare.

Speaking at the session of the Central Council of the Society for Settling Toiling Jews on the land (OZET), which opened in the premises of the Jewish State Theatre in Moscow on November 22, 1937, S. M. Dimanstein, chairman of the Central Council of the OZET, pointed out, amongst other things:

“After the Great Socialist Revolution, the Jewish people, together with other previously oppressed nationalities of Russia, rose to a new life. The toiling Jews disproved the slander of anti-semites and other enemies of the people that Jews were unfit to work in agriculture.

“There are hundreds of Jewish collective farms in the U.S.S.R., some of which are among the foremost in their districts.”

M. Dimanstein also pointed out that there were “more than 130,000 members of such collectives, whilst approximately 60 per cent of the Jewish population in the U.S.S.R. were factory and office workers. The Jewish youth was studying in secondary and higher educational institutions. A new Jewish intelligentsia, reared in the U.S.S.R. during the years of the Great Socialist Revolution, was now working in all branches of the national economy.”

In conclusion M. Dimanstein said: “We have the Jewish Autonomous Province, the existence of which is recorded in the Stalin Constitution. Together with the whole country, this province will elect its deputies to the Council of the Union and to the Council of Nationalities. Next year about 100 million roubles will be invested in construction in the Jewish Autonomous Province. A new Jewish people, a Soviet people, is arising in the U.S.S.R. In fraternal friendship with other nationalities of our great Fatherland and under the leadership of the Communist Party and Comrade Stalin, the Jewish people in the Soviet Union is building up a radiant and happy life.”

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It was not, of course, easy for large numbers of Jews who had had no other outlet in Tsarist Russia than that of petty trade, to enter industrial enterprise or to start working on the land. But after a short time, being given the opportunity under the Soviets, they have made good in both these spheres. Here are a few extracts from interviews with Jewish collective farmers at Zhvanitz, published in the Soviet Press.

Sholem Blank, who formerly ran a small baker's business, said: "It is now six years since I joined the collective farm. Honestly speaking, I live a good deal better now. It is a simple matter with us, if you wish to live well, you must work. I am doing my best. I have already earned 170 labour days, but I am not going to stop at this, of course. I shall earn more labour days. For each labour day I receive five kilograms of grain, 10 kilograms of potatoes, maize, and so on. I have my own cottage, kitchen garden, a cow, some poultry. I have learned the art of sowing and mowing. I have attained a fair knowledge of all agricultural work. I no longer worry about the future. I have everything.

"It is true during the time that I have been in the collective farm I had an unpleasant experience. I had sold my surplus grain at a higher price than the State price. I was given three years for that, but I tried to expiate my guilt by good work; I was backed by the collective farm and the sentence was rescinded."

Schneiderman, a former blacksmith, said: "I have worked as a blacksmith for thirty-eight years, and nearly the whole of my life has been spent in Zhvanitz. Once I was summoned by the landlord to repair the carts for him. I worked a whole day and I earned two roubles. This happened, I recollect quite well, on a Friday. On my way home I was met by a peasant. 'Where are you coming from, Jew?' he asked me. I told him.

"'Jew, come to the constable. Don't you know that Jews are not allowed to roam the villages?' I begged him to let me go. There were only three kilometres left to Zhvanitz. But he was adamant. I gave him the money I had earned, for if he had taken me to the constable I should have had to give my earnings away

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anyhow, and should have stayed overnight in a cell into the bargain.

"I walked on, within ten minutes the same story was repeated. I had to part with my last rouble. I had so dreamed of spending a good and comfortable Sabbath with ample food for my family. Things turned out differently, and what is more, on the road I was beaten up by drunkards and barely managed to reach my house at dawn. We were not considered human in those days. Anybody could arrest and beat us. Among us old Jews are a good many cripples, blind, and lame people—we had crippled ourselves deliberately in order to avoid service in the Tsar's army. But now it's quite a different thing. Our State is governed by workers. Since 1919 I have been a member of the village Soviet. I am respected, I am asked for my advice and opinion: 'And what is your opinion, Comrade Schneiderman?' What a pity that I am now an old man or I should be overcoming mountains."

A woman collective farmer, Bonda Sheindel, stated: "I was a tradeswoman, I had my own retail store and was disfranchized. . . . Believe me, never before did I know what life really means. In my little store I used to trade day and night. It was only under the Soviet system that I took the first train trip in my life, from Zhvanitz to Kharkov. Before that time I had never gone out of Zhvanitz further than half a kilometre. The trip made a huge impression on me, and on returning home I decided to join the collective farm.

"Formerly I had no confidence in my own powers. I never believed I would be able to manage agricultural work, but it turned out that I did, and what is more, I am now a Stakhanovite. I am rewarded twice every year. I have 175 labour days to my credit, but the agricultural year is not yet over. I live with my mother, with whom I go to the club where I read the newspapers. Before I joined the collective farm I used to be sick quite often, going to the doctor almost daily. And now during six years' work in the collective farm I have not paid a single visit to the hospital nor to the physician. Working in the field has brought me real

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health. I have now two desires: to take a trip to Moscow and to buy myself a new winter coat for four or five hundred roubles. I have the money."

Again, an old Jew of the Kiev Province in the course of a speech at an election meeting said: "In my time I have seen much great grief. At present it is terrible for me even to recall the life under Tsarism. At that time I worked as a stevedore from dawn to dawn. In the winter my hands and feet were often frostbitten. I earned a mere pittance.

"And not only I, but all poor people lived like that, all poor people suffered like that. We were tortured, our life was made miserable by the Tsar, the landowners, the capitalists, and various other parasites.

"The Great Socialist Revolution brought us tremendous happiness. What were things like before? Old people like myself died of hunger and cold in the street. And now, it is recorded in the Stalin Constitution that the Soviet Government provides us with material security in old age. I feel the solicitude of the Government. Formerly, nobody considered me, and now I am a citizen with equal rights and am taking part in a great event—I am participating in the elections.

"And our children? Formerly our children played on rubbish-heaps, and not a few died of hunger. My childhood was a miserable one. But at present our children and our grandchildren have a happy, joyous life."

We have chosen these extracts from many others that might be given because they throw a flood of light on both the former and present position of Jews which we know to be true from our own observations.

Now for the view of a Ukrainian. The Ukraine is well known for its fertile soil, its rich natural resources, its talented people, and delightful climate. It is the second largest Republic in the Union, both in regard to area and population. No wonder that Fascist Germany and also Poland, when it dares, casts longing glances at it. But although in Tsarist times, too, the natural resources and

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the rich soil of the Ukraine were exploited, it was only for the most part by the comparatively primitive methods prevalent in the Tsarist Empire generally. Since the Soviets came to power, and more particularly during the last ten years, vast sums have been spent in extending, mechanizing and modernizing the Ukraine industries, the output of which now far exceeds that of pre-war.

The production of coal and pig-iron, for instance, in 1936 was three times that in 1913; the output of the machine construction and the chemical industry was more than six times, and the production of electricity more than ten times that in 1913. The Ukraine now supplies the U.S.S.R. generally with large quantities of coal, metal, grain, salt, beet, sugar, machinery, etc., and receives in return textiles, various complex machinery, timber, oil, fish, etc.

At the same time the income of an average worker's family has nearly doubled as compared with 1932 and the well-being of the peasants has risen correspondingly. In villages where before the Revolution the number of literate persons might almost be counted on one's fingers, very few illiterates remain, young people are studying or have graduated as teachers, doctors, agronomists, tractor and combine operators, industrial experts, etc.

Here is what Zhabokritzky, an average worker in Odessa, has to say: "I was the son of a worker and left school after the fourth class at the age of eleven to go to work. I was forced to do this because our family was large and our poverty unbearable. Who am I to-day? There are eight in my family: my wife and I, five sons and a daughter. My oldest son, Alexander, is an electrical engineer; Vasili is an artist; Sergei is a student at the school of architecture of the Builders' Institute; Vladimir is studying at Kharkov; Nikolai is in the evening school of the Builders' Institute; and my daughter, Elena, the youngest, is getting excellent marks in the ninth class.

"Even I, at fifty-three, have begun to study. Last year I finished the technical course with a mark of 'good.' I am a Stakhanovite and in October I earned more than 1,000 roubles."

Obushenko, a member of the agricultural artel "Bolshevik" in the village of Uten (Terekhov Province, White Russia), gives an

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equally characteristic picture of White Russia before and after the Revolution: "White Russia before the Revolution," he says, "was a country of mud and forests, of ignorance and superstition. My own village, Uten, was typical of the other thousands of White Russian villages. Tumble-down, smoky huts, signs of poverty and misery everywhere in the streets; fields divided up into small strips, of which many were situated here and there within the grounds of the landed estate owners. . . .

"Now Uten has become unrecognizable. We have our big Kolkhoz 'Bolshevik,' in which work has been lightened by the use of tractors and other agricultural machinery.

"The buildings of the Kolkhoz have completely changed the face of the village. We have new homes, a school, club, etc. We have radio, telephones, cinema. In every home you will find newspapers, journals, books.

"Life generally has become well-to-do . . . we have plenty of grain, potatoes, fruit, forage for our livestock, as well as money . . . could I ever have thought of such a life when I worked as a day labourer for the kulaks and landowners?

"Our young boys and girls attend school, technical colleges, and universities. During the last few years some ten young people from Uten graduated as teachers; six as engineers and six as expert technicians; five are in leading positions in the Red Army and every one of us White Russian Kolkhozniks can declare sincerely and joyfully 'I am a White Russian and am happy and proud to be a citizen of the U.S.S.R., a member with equal rights of the great family of peoples united under the flag of the Lenin-Stalin party.' "

The brief life story of Kalandr Talibekov, now a member of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., is characteristic (with the exception of course of membership of the Supreme Soviet and certain other details) of all the formerly poor inhabitants of Tadzhikistan. "I was born," related Talibekov, "in the village of Rushan (Pamir). My father was a day labourer all his life, and at eight years of age I was already looking after the sheep and goats

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on a neighbouring rich farm. I lost my mother and soon after my father, and having no home I went to find work in the mines of Shurab. Since then thirty years have passed, I am still a miner—but with a difference, I am now a Soviet miner. . . .

“I still live at Shurab, but the town and mines, too, are very different from what they used to be. Gone are our primitive tools; we now have an electrical conveyor and mechanism where before we worked with hand tools. Our dark miserable huts have gone; we now live in good homes with plenty of light. Gone, too, are our rags; we now have boots and decent clothes. We no longer go hungry and we earn enough not only to eat and dress well, but to enjoy culture. . . .

“The formerly exploited oppressed Tsarist colony, whose life blood was sucked greedily by Tsarist officials, mullahs, priests, emirs, and bais (landlords, etc.), by Russian and native bourgeoisie, has become a cheerful Republic—an equal among the eleven Republics of the Soviet Union.

“In Tsarist days there were no big industrial enterprises in Tadzhikistan, now the pit in which I work, in which some five hundred miners are employed, is only considered as an average size in Soviet Tadzhikistan. There is scarcely a regional centre in Tadzhikistan where there are not at least one, two, or three large enterprises. . . . Under Tsardom the majority of the Tadzhiks were illiterate, now we have there thousands of schools and colleges, libraries, theatres, and clubs. We Tadzhiks are now building up a new culture, national in form, socialist in content.”

It may also be added that Tadzhikistan is a very mountainous Republic—the most mountainous in the U.S.S.R. The sun is extremely strong and the soil in the valleys between the mountains is very rich, producing excellent cotton, grapes, and fruit, but there is a shortage of water, and this is where the enterprise of the Soviets came in. During the last ten years hundreds of thousands of hectares have been irrigated, thus increasing the crops enor-

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mously. Moreover, scientific expeditions have investigated, discovered, and started to develop great mineral resources in the Pamirs. Tadzhikistan now provides the rest of the country with fine Egyptian cotton, wool, silk, fruit, tin ore, and a number of rare metals.

A railway to Tadzhikistan which runs to the capital of the Republic, the fine new town of Stalinabad, and wide motor roads within, have been and are being constructed. Near Stalinabad, situated in the centre of the Republic, an electrical station has been erected.

Here is the view of a Tatar, who at a meeting of Tatar electors residing in the Stalin Election District of Moscow held at the House of Technique of the Stalin District on December 1, 1937, said: "Prior to the Great Socialist Revolution, we Tatars were disfranchized and neglected. We were given no opportunity to study and learn a profession. To-day all roads are open to us, to study, to work, to develop. In the past I was a shepherd and a hired labourer. To-day I am a leader of a Stakhanov brigade of metal workers and am getting a general education in a night school which is conducted in our own language. Among Tatars we have teachers, engineers, mechanics, factory directors, and people of other specialities.

"All this is a result of the Great Socialist Revolution, of the work of the great Communist Party and the beloved leader of the toilers, Comrade Stalin."

Now let a Bashkirian speak. Waliula Burtazin is now vice-chairman of the Bashkir Art Committee and this is what he says of himself: "I was formerly an agricultural labourer, and now I am a People's Artist of the Republic and a member of the Central Executive Committee of Bashkiria. I was one of the founders of the first Bashkirian dramatic theatre, which was established sixteen years ago, and drew its first actors from among men of the Red Army. At present this theatre has a company of fifty fully qualified actors, including seven honoured artists of the Union. There are at present in Bashkiria sixteen theatres, including Bash-

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kirian, Chuvash, Marii, and Russian, as well as a philharmonic society, a symphony orchestra, a Bashkirian national choir of sixty voices, and a folk-lore group.

“We have produced, on the Bashkirian stage, such high artistic works as Gorky’s *Yegor Bulychev*, Shakespeare’s *Othello*, the comedies of Ostrovsky, and Schiller’s *Robbers*. Of our own national plays we have performed *The Chequered Mountain* and *For the Fatherland*, whose author, Afsal Tagirov, is the chairman of the Central Executive Committee of Bashkiria.

“For the centenary of Pushkin, who wrote his *Captain’s Daughter* in Bashkiria, we are preparing performances of *Boris Godunov* and *Miserly Knight*. We are also working on a new play by Kirshon entitled *A Great Day*. We devote special attention to amateur art. This year we organized a national art olympiad in which 10,000 took part.”

He continues: “Could Uzbekistan, Buryat-Mongolia, Chuvashia, and the other national republics and territories even dare to dream of their own theatres, symphony orchestra, and art studios in Tsarist times? Could the downtrodden nomadic Bashkirian people, living in tents both winter and summer, even think of anything like a tolerable existence?

“Only under Soviet rule did we manage to take up a settled mode of life, to develop the natural resources of the country, and to devote due attention to national culture and art. The great folklore epic *Manas*, which for its artistic merit may be ranked with the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, was put in writing only after the Great Proletarian Revolution. Until then it was handed down from generation to generation by story-tellers.”

Here are a few cameos culled from the Soviet Press regarding some of the nomadic tribes or of peoples well on the road to extinction before the Revolution:

“My Nogai people,” said Kuntaganov, a Nogai horse breeder, in the course of an election meeting, “had no Fatherland in the past. They were homeless Nomads whom the landlords and kulaks did not consider human beings. Only under Soviet power, and

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thanks to Lenin and Stalin, did my people find its dear Fatherland, its splendid collective farms. How happy I am that I live and work for the good of our Fatherland. I have been working in the collective farm for seven years; I have given and am giving all my strength to the work, learning from Bolsheviks to fight against difficulties."

Again, at an election meeting in a Nenetz village in the Arctic circle, K. D. Yamkin, himself a Nenetz, declared: "I am overjoyed to have been nominated by the toilers of our district for the Soviet of Nationalities. I was born in a reindeer tent, and there I spent my childhood. In my early years I worked for kulaks. The labour was hard and there was no pleasure in life. Soviet power has brought us happiness and joy. I know that I am working not only for myself, but also for the good of our splendid Fatherland. I see the new life, I see how formerly oppressed peoples of Taimir have been regenerated."

The *Moscow News* of October 27, 1937, described a visit of some medical students to a village of the Mansi people living in the Taiga of the Northern Urals. The Mansi were once a strong, warlike tribe of hunters and deer breeders. Pressed back by stronger tribes, and later falling under the yoke of the Russian colonizers, the Mansi began to degenerate and die out. Vodka and disease were brought to the Taiga by the Russian merchants and officials. At the time of the Soviet Revolution the Mansi were on the verge of extinction. Not more than a few families remained of the large tribe.

"In a thicket on the bank of a river the tourists saw a few uninhabited log huts; the Mansi, it appeared, had moved to their summer residence on a plateau. A little further on, pointed huts, covered with birch-bark, appeared. Nearby, a herd of deer, like a forest of moving branched horns, grazed lazily on a green slope. A group of curious children came out of the huts to meet the tourists. The guests were welcomed in a friendly manner by the hunters.

"The Mansi village Soviet, situated in the camp of Toshemka,

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was formed only a year ago, but cultural and Soviet work is already beginning; the group of active workers consists chiefly of the youth, organized by the Young Communist Pantyukin. Under the influence of discussions and explanatory work, a general meeting of the tribe forbade the witch-doctor to 'perform miracles.' Only recently the witch-doctor was consulted for advice, people came to him to solve difficulties or to drive out the 'spirit' of a sickness with invocations. For the first time in the history of the Mansi, they possess a hospital and a school in which the pupils board."

At present the Mansi people are isolated by impassable swamps and forests, but in a year or two a railway will connect them with the rest of the U.S.S.R., and thus give them more opportunities for a wider, more prosperous and cultured life.

Finally, we quote from one more representative of the national minorities—the late noted poet of Daghestan, Suleiman Stalsky, who died in November 1937: "I grew up as I was born, in a cattle-shed along with the beasts. A few years later my father went out of his mind, and I started to work at the age of thirteen in the plantations for a while, and after that I worked as a labourer on a railway, and later in the oil fields at Baku. When I was thirty I went back to my native village and married a poor peasant girl, an orphan."

He describes his humiliations at the hands of the Tsarist authorities, particularly when in his poems he endeavoured to show things as they were and as they should be, and said: "Before the Revolution I never had enough to eat. I was always borrowing bread from the neighbours and was always in debt to them. Now a prosperous life is being built up before my eyes. This year my family received nearly five tons of grain for three hundred labour days; I never had so much grain in all my life, although my hair is grey.

"Formerly, however hard I worked and sweated, the fruits of my labours went to the khans and the beks (local native landlords) and the State officials. But now everyone's work is reckoned,

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and whether he works with his hands or his brain his labour is honoured," and he could now truly write:

"All nations now have equal rights,
Beyond recall the ancient slights.
Your victories, my land, are lights
To all the peoples, Daghestan!
Lezghin and Russian and the Jew
Are one, and single aims pursue!"

And so we might continue indefinitely to give examples of the progress towards freedom and well-being of the nationalities in the U.S.S.R., and we repeat that most of these examples are of average people—examples which might be multiplied, with slight variations, by thousands.

If the Soviet Government had done nothing else, the solution of the question of the friendly co-existence of the numerous nationalities within the frontiers of the U.S.S.R. would secure for it an honourable place in world history. But, of course, the question of national minorities, which is agitating so many parts of the world, cannot be solved as it were in space. The Soviet Government, with the best intentions, would have been powerless to bring about amity between Cossack and Jew, Ukrainian and Great Russian, Pole and White Russian, Armenian, Georgian, and Tatar, etc., etc., were it not for its general economic policy. In a society based on co-operation, on production for use and not for profit, there is naturally no room for exploitation of one nationality by another, just as there is no room for the exploitation of one class by another. The success of the Soviet national policy is a living proof of the fact that there is no necessary national antagonism among the different races and nations. In a society based on socialist principles, every nationality may be given full freedom to develop to the full its own national language and culture, even to enter into friendly emulation with one another without arousing mutual national hatreds.

If peace and amity between some two hundred nationalities—which at the outset were at vastly different stages of economic,

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political, and cultural development—could be established over one-sixth of the world's surface, all enjoying full freedom to develop their own characteristic national culture, then there is no reason whatever to doubt that the same could be done in the rest of the world, if capitalist exploitation of class by class and nation by nation were eliminated.

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WHEN the preliminary draft of the Stalin Constitution was published in June 1936, it attracted, not without reason, world-wide attention. This Constitution is known as the Stalin Constitution because it was on Stalin's initiative and under his guidance that the new Constitution was considered and drawn up.

The provisions of the Stalin Constitution are, in reality, an excellent summing up of the economic and cultural progress of the U.S.S.R. during the twenty years of the existence of the Soviet regime. Consequently, in considering it, we shall to some extent recapitulate the subject-matter of the previous chapters in this book.

Side by side with the economic and cultural development, and, indeed, arising therefrom, there has been, as we have seen, a steady transformation in the class composition of the population and the distribution of wealth with an accompanying development in the political consciousness of the people. As regards the class composition of the population, the first and foremost fact is that there no longer exists an exploiting class living upon the labour of the workers and peasants. In 1913, the kulaks (rich peasants who employed other peasants) constituted 12.3 per cent of the total population, whilst another 3.6 per cent belonged to the big and petty town bourgeoisie, merchants and landed estate owners; these all, of course, lived by the exploitation of their fellow citizens. Now neither of these classes exist at all.

Secondly, the class of small poor and middle peasants and handicraftsmen who worked for themselves constituted, in 1913, 65.1 per cent of the population. In 1937, this class only constituted 5.6 per cent and it is constantly diminishing. Neither the middle and still less the poor peasants could be classed as kulaks, but on the contrary were themselves in the main exploited by the kulaks and landed estate owners.

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Thirdly, workers (manual and non-manual) in 1913 constituted 16.7 per cent; in 1937 the proportion had risen to 34.7 per cent. The rest of the population, including adult students, not gainfully employed, pensioners, members of army, etc., constituted 2.3 per cent in 1913 and 4.2 per cent in 1937.

At the same time, by 1936, the socialist factor of the national economy accounted for over 99 per cent of the national income; 99.8 per cent of the gross output of industry; 97.7 per cent of the gross output of agriculture; 100 per cent of the retail trade and 98.7 per cent of the basic capital of the national economy.

In 1918 the Soviet Government laid down as its principal aim:

"The abolition of all exploitation of man by man; the complete abolition of the division of society into classes, the ruthless suppression of the exploiter and the establishment of a society organized on socialist lines."

It is thus seen that the fundamental aim set forth in the first Soviet Constitution in 1918 had been practically achieved by 1936.

In view of the political and cultural backwardness of the peasantry in 1918, the first Soviet Constitution, as well as the subsequent 1923-25 Constitutions of the U.S.S.R., gave the workers greater representation—it was then definitely a dictatorship of the proletariat—the latter having played a predominant part in the organization of the revolution and the consolidation of its gains. At the same time every effort was made to raise the economic, cultural, and political level of the peasantry. This aim was achieved with the establishment and firm organization of a large-scale collective system of agriculture, by the merging together of the numerous small poor and middle farms into collective farms.

The triumph of collectivization brought in its train not only a great increase in the output of agricultural produce but it has brought culture to the village, it has introduced modern technique, agronomists, tractor and combine workers—it has opened up new horizons and has brought the village nearer the town, the peasantry much nearer to the level of the workers, both as regards culture and political consciousness.

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Of course, it would be quite wrong to imagine that all the peasants, even in the Kolkhozy, are now up to the level of the urban workers or that there is no difference in psychology between the urban workers and a large number of the peasantry, but they are certainly being steadily brought closer to one another as the years pass by.

Further, it was in those early days a dictatorship of the proletariat, not only because the bourgeoisie, kulaks and remnants of the landed estate owners, the former nobility and officer class were still fairly strong and the peasantry very backward, but large sections of the intelligentsia (particularly those of upper and middle class origin) opposed the Soviets both openly and by way of secret sabotage. It is this which explains the deep distrust of the intelligentsia at first felt by the Soviet workers. We had a good example of this when in 1925 we toured the U.S.S.R. in company with a number of Russians. Amongst the latter were men and women of working-class origin as well as a number belonging to the intelligentsia, but loyal to the Soviets. During the long train journeys there were protracted discussions on all sorts of political, economic, literary, philosophical, and other subjects.

During one discussion—we forgot the exact subject-matter of it—a remark was made by one of the intelligentsia which brought a quick rejoinder from one of the women (whom judging by her manner of speech and general behaviour we had regarded as having belonged to the intelligentsia): “Only an intellectual could reason so.”

“But,” exclaimed one of us, rather astonished: “You yourself are an intellectual.” “I?” she retorted, half offended, half amazed, “I, Bozhe Sokhrani!” (God forbid. At that time they had not yet dropped these in the U.S.S.R. now quite archaic expressions). “My parents were workers and I myself have worked at dress-making since the age of eleven.” She was genuinely proud of having been a worker and of being of working-class origin, and however much time she may have spent in educating herself, she had a horror of being classed as a mere intellectual.

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In general, the workers on that tour could hold their own in most of the discussions; but if there was something to which they could find no reply, they would fling out: "Well, this is the way an intellectual reasons, we workers look at things differently," and this was final.

However, as the years went by a larger and larger proportion of the old intelligentsia became convinced by its own experience that never before had there been such wide opportunities for creative work in all branches of culture, literature, art, music, science, architecture, etc., as in the Soviet Union. We have dealt with this subject at greater length in a previous chapter. Secondly, during the last ten years a new intelligentsia of working class and poor peasant origin has arisen, whose psychology has been shaped by the new order of society and on whose loyalty the workers and peasantry could rely.

At the same time it must be recognized that there is still considerable difference between the position and cultural level of many brain and manual workers; but whilst it would be untrue to say that all distinctions (in standard of life, culture, and psychology) between peasants and workers and between brain and manual workers have been wiped out, it is emphatically true to say that the overwhelming mass of people in the U.S.S.R. are toilers either in socialist or in co-operative and Kolkhoz enterprises. It is not so much classes which continue to exist in the U.S.S.R. but rather different sections amongst the citizen toilers, and the differences in the standard of living will tend to disappear as the wealth of the country increases.

These changes, the complete elimination of private ownership in the means of production and exchange and the rise in the political consciousness and culture of the peasants, as well as the rise of a loyal Soviet intelligentsia, find their natural reflection in the new Constitution which, after discussion in every nook and corner of the U.S.S.R. by workers, peasants, housewives, teachers, scientists, etc., was adopted with some modifications of the preliminary draft in December 1936.

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Whilst in the earlier Constitutions it was laid down that all power was vested "in the Soviets of Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers (later Red Army) Deputies," Article 2 of the Stalin Constitution says:

"The political foundation of the U.S.S.R. is formed by the Soviets of Toilers' Deputies."

And again Article 3 states:

"All power in U.S.S.R. belongs to the toilers of the town and village in the form of Soviets of Toilers' Deputies."

Toilers here stand for all who work by hand and brain, and since a parasitic class no longer exists, this means that State power is really in the hands of the whole people.

By Articles 134-138 equal electoral rights are conferred on all adult citizens of the Soviet Union irrespective of nationality, race, sex, status, or social origin. This is a recognition of the cultural and psychological progress made by the peasantry; it also reflects the strength of the Soviet system and the fact that most Soviet citizens of even bourgeois, kulak, or other non-working class or peasant origin have now become loyal to the Soviets.

So long as there was still any doubt as to "who would conquer whom" (Lenin's phrase), so long was State power guarded jealously from those who might be expected to be hostile to the Soviet regime—the class alien elements as they were called. Now, however, although there undoubtedly still are such elements in the towns and villages of the U.S.S.R., their number is comparatively small, and it is felt that they can safely be given an opportunity to enter into the new life by being accorded the rights of full Soviet citizenship.

The equality of rights of the sexes, races, and nationalities of the U.S.S.R. was, of course, recognized by the Soviets from the very first.

As Stalin said so admirably at the Soviet Congress, December 1936:

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"The Constitution does not recognize active and passive citizens, all citizens are recognized as being active citizens. It does not recognize any difference in rights between men and women, between those with or without a fixed abode, between the propertied and propertyless, between the educated and uneducated; for in the Soviet Constitution all citizens are equal in their rights. It is not the property status, nor the national origin, nor the sex, nor the official standing, but the personal abilities and personal work of each citizen which defines his position in our society."

The political and cultural progress of the U.S.S.R. is also reflected in the following changes in the Constitution: (1) elections are direct—hitherto only the local Soviets were elected directly; (2) all elections are secret—hitherto they had been by a show of hands; (3) elections take place on a territorial basis—hitherto the electoral unit was the factory, the mine, the institution, the trade union organization, Red Army, etc., etc.

With a mainly illiterate population almost wholly unused to a representative system of government, the introduction of the secret ballot and direct elections to the highest organs of government was, of course, wellnigh impossible. Now that literacy is rapidly approaching the 100 per cent mark and social and political literacy has made such great progress among all sections of the population the introduction of the secret ballot and direct elections has become possible.

Again, when the workers were still struggling to maintain and consolidate their supremacy it was undoubtedly important psychologically for the electors to vote as definite sections of workers, etc., and for the local deputy to be clearly identified with these groups. Now, however, that the whole population have become toilers with equal rights the territorial unit will no doubt be found to be more convenient.

The important principle of the right of recall of a deputy is retained in the new Constitution (Article 142). In addition, the principle of the referendum is provided for in Article 49.

Judges of the People's Courts are elected for three years by universal equal secret ballot of the citizens of the districts in which they operate.

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In general, the organs of the central and local government, the Commissariats, etc., are retained with certain changes in the mode of their elections or formation. Their functions and relations to one another are clearly defined in Chapters III to VIII.

In the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. adopted July 1923, the Council of People's Commissars, whose functions are executive and administrative, consisted of the chairman and several vice-chairmen, together with the heads (the People's Commissars) of nine People's Commissariats (including the Supreme Economic Council). As time went on the progress and growing complexity of the national economy as well as the requirements of cultural development led to the formation of new Commissariats, until by 1935 there were fifteen Commissariats (including the Council of Labour and Defence, the State Planning Commission, the Commission of Soviet Control).

The Stalin Constitution was modified in the course of the first session of the supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. (January 1938) and provides for the establishment of twenty-one People's Commissariats. The Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. is formed by the heads of these People's Commissariats, together with the chairmen of the Gosplan and the Commission for Soviet Control, the chairman of the State Bank, the presidents of the Committees for Higher Education and for Art—all these, as also the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and three vice-chairmen, are elected by the Supreme Soviet.

Among the changes made recently in the People's Commissariats may be mentioned the splitting of the Commissariat for Heavy Industry into a Commissariat for Defence Industry, a Commissariat for Machine Construction, and a Commissariat for the other Heavy Industries.

This division of the original Commissariat for Heavy Industries, as Molotov pointed out in his speech at the Supreme Council, was necessitated by the enormous increase in the output of the heavy industries; during the last ten years machine construction has increased no less than 13·5 times.

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Several new Commissariats have also been formed; among these are (1) the People's Commissariat for State Collections (purchases). Previously these purchases had been carried out by a State Collection Committee which had local agencies in different parts of the country. The work of this committee has increased and is likely to increase year by year with the improvement and expansion of agriculture.

During the two Five-Year Plans, i.e. 1928-37, State grain collections, for instance, have increased 2·5 times, the collection of cotton has trebled, and that of potatoes and sugar-beet have doubled. It was felt therefore that the Committee for State Purchases should now have the status of a People's Commissariat. (2) A separate People's Commissariat for the Navy has now been formed; this was necessitated by the growing strength of the U.S.S.R., and perhaps even more by the needs of defence in the present state of world affairs when the Fascist Powers are openly and secretly planning and indulging in aggression. The U.S.S.R. already has four fleets—the Black Sea, Baltic, Northern, and Pacific, and she is strengthening these with the view to making herself as strong on the sea as she already is on land and in the air. It should be noted that the total frontiers of the U.S.S.R. extend over 60,000 kilometres, and of these some 43,000 are marine boundaries. The new Commissariat will undoubtedly assist powerfully in this aim.

(3) The State Bank has been separated from the Finance Commissariat. Henceforth it will be directly subordinated to the Council of People's Commissars and the chairman of the Bank is to have the status of a People's Commissar, and as such will be a member of the Council of People's Commissars. In making this proposal M. Molotov at the January Session of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. gave the following cogent reason for the change:

"Taking into account only the transactions of the State Bank with the national economy, excluding inter-bank transactions, the turnover of the State Bank during the last eight years has increased thirteen times. During 1928-29 the accounts of the State Bank

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with the national economy comprised 176,662,219,000 roubles, but in 1936 they comprised 2,115,793,386,000 roubles."

At the same time the work of the Commissariat for Finance has also expanded. "Taking our budget as a whole," said Molotov, "i.e. including the Union, Republican and local budgets, then we see that, whereas in 1928-29 it amounted to 7·5 milliard roubles, in 1937, according to preliminary returns, it has reached 101 milliard roubles, i.e. it has increased thirteen times during the nine years."

During the January session of the Supreme Council some further changes in the new Constitution were adopted; among these were a number regarding the territorial divisions (areas, regions, etc.) within the various constituent Republics of the Union, etc., but the most important additional amendment was that modifying Article 49 whereby the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. is empowered to decide upon the declaration of martial law wherever it may be necessary to do so in cases of emergency.

As in the previous Constitution of the U.S.S.R., so in accordance with the Stalin Constitution, the Soviet Parliament consists of two Chambers which together form the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. Legislative functions belong exclusively to this Supreme Soviet. But at the outset it must be stressed that these two Chambers are not an upper and a lower house on the model of the British and other Parliaments. Unlike the latter, the two Chambers—the Council of the Union and the Council of Nationalities (which has been devised to give additional representation to the national minorities so that their specific interests could have consideration)—are both elected and have equal legislative rights. The two Chambers sit concurrently and no law is considered approved until it has been adopted by both Chambers. In cases of disagreement between the two Chambers, the question in dispute is submitted to a conciliation Commission in which both have equal representation. Should no agreement be reached in this Commission or should its decision fail to satisfy one of the Chambers, the question is again submitted to the two Chambers, and

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if no agreed decision is then reached, the Supreme Soviet is dissolved by its Presidium and new elections must be held.

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet is elected at a joint session of the two Chambers. Between sessions of the Supreme Soviet the Presidium carries out the functions of the latter, to which however it is subordinate. The Council of People's Commissars is subordinate to the Supreme Soviet and the Presidium of the latter.

For the Council of the Union each electoral district, whether urban or rural, includes 300,000 inhabitants and elects one deputy.

For the Council of Nationalities, in which it is sought more particularly to have representation from all the numerous nationalities inhabiting the U.S.S.R., the electoral districts are formed differently. The eleven Constituent Republics of the Union (Union Republics) are each divided into twenty-five equal electoral districts, each Autonomous Republic is divided into eleven electoral districts, each Autonomous Province into five electoral districts, and each national region forms one electoral district. (Note.—These Autonomous Republics, provinces, and regions are constituent parts of the various Union Republics.)

As in the case of the Council of the Union, so in that of the Council of Nationalities each electoral district elects one member.

For the convenience of voters, as in other countries, the electoral districts are divided into wards for voting purposes, and care has been taken that the inhabitants of even the remotest part of the country as well as men of the Red Army in military units, people aboard ships, etc., should be enabled to vote.

All elections are held on one day, which as far as possible must be a non-working day. All election expenses are borne by the State.

The present Constitution lays down as a fact that which the former Constitution laid down as an aim, e.g. the organization of a classless socialist society. In accordance with this, Articles 4 and 5 state that the economic basis of the U.S.S.R. is socialist and the means of production are owned and controlled socially; socialist ownership is either in the form of State ownership (public

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property) or in the form of co-operative and Kolkhoz ownership, and subsequent articles proceed to define the various classes of socialist property—land, natural resources, means of production, transport, etc., etc.

At the same time side by side with the dominant socialist economy, the law permits small private farms and handicraft enterprises in which no hired labour is employed. Moreover, every household within a Kolkhoz has for its own use, in accordance with the statutes of the agricultural artel, a plot of land, a house, livestock, and minor agricultural implements.

The private property of citizens resulting from their earnings or savings, their dwellings and household goods, as well as all property for private use, is protected by law. In other words, private property continues to exist, but no one will be permitted to use it for exploiting other people's labour power.

It may be well to point out here that inequality of electoral rights, voting by show of hands and indirect elections were not inherent principles in the Soviet political creed.

As we have shown above, they were the outcome of the economic, cultural, and psychological conditions prevailing in the Soviet Republic when the former Constitutions were adopted in 1918-19 and again in 1922-25. The Soviet leaders were fully aware of the undesirable features of the earlier Constitutions and regarded them as merely temporary. Thus, in the programme of the Communist Party of Soviet Russia it was definitely pointed out that the preponderating role given to the urban workers and the indirect and open ballot were necessary only

“... as temporary measures in struggling with the attempts of the exploiters to defend or restore their privileges. . . . The party will endeavour to narrow down these limitations and to abolish them completely . . . as the objective possibilities of the exploitation of man by man disappears.”

Lenin himself, speaking on this subject at the Eighth Party Congress in 1919, after pointing out that: “No country in the world had done even a tenth of what the Soviet Republic had

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accomplished in a few months to attract the workers and peasants to participate in the administration of the State . . ." and that this was "real democracy as distinct from paper democracy," continued: "But this in no wise does away with the fact that we are brought up against the insufficient culture of the masses. We by no means regarded the question of the deprivation of the bourgeoisie of electoral rights from an absolute point of view, because theoretically it is quite possible to admit that the Dictatorship of the Proletariat would suppress the bourgeoisie at every step but might not deprive it of electoral rights. This is theoretically quite comprehensible and we do not bring forward our Constitution as a model for all other countries. We merely say that he who thinks socialism can be established without the suppression of the bourgeoisie is no socialist. But whilst it is essential to suppress the bourgeoisie as a class, it is by no means essential to deprive it of electoral rights and equality. We do not desire liberty for the bourgeoisie, nor can we admit equality for exploiters and exploited . . . but we consider that such measures as the inequality between workers and peasants are not simply ordained by Constitutions, the Constitution laid them down after they had formed themselves in actual life. . . . The organization of the proletariat proceeded far more rapidly than the organization of the peasantry. This made the workers the mainstay of the Revolution . . . our Constitution is compelled to lay down this inequality because our level of culture is still weak, our organization is still weak.

"But we are not transforming the principle of this inequality into an ideal; on the contrary, by the provisions of its programme the Party undertakes to work systematically for the annihilation of this inequality between the more organized proletariat and the peasantry. We shall do away with this inequality so soon as we succeed in raising the cultural level of the country. Then we shall be able to do without these limitations."

And again at the same Congress in the course of another speech Lenin declared: "Only the dictatorship of one class—the proletariat—can resolve the question regarding the struggle with the

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bourgeoisie for power. Only the dictatorship of the proletariat can defeat the bourgeoisie; only the proletariat can overthrow the bourgeoisie; only the proletariat can lead the masses against the bourgeoisie.

“However, from this it by no means follows—this would be a gross error—that later, in the construction of communism, when the bourgeoisie has already been overthrown, when political power is already in the hands of the proletariat—that then we can continue to do without the help of intermediate elements.” (Lenin is here referring to the middle peasants.)

The new Constitution is thus but the natural outcome, as foreseen by Lenin, of the economic progress and cultural development of the masses of the U.S.S.R.

The growing and sure prosperity of the U.S.S.R. is also reflected in what is perhaps the most interesting feature in the Stalin Constitution, i.e. Chapter X, which lays down “the fundamental rights and duties of Soviet citizens.”

Here, for the first time in the history of any country, the principles for which socialists have agitated for many decades are laid down as the inalienable rights of every citizen, e.g. the right and duty to work, on the principle that the country must provide work; but he who refuses to work neither shall he eat; the right to leisure; the right to adequate support in old age, or when temporarily or permanently incapacitated; the right to education of all children and young people to the full limits of their capacity and irrespective of the social position of their parents. The measures already taken and to be taken to assure the practical realization of all these rights are clearly laid down.

This chapter also lays down the complete economic, cultural, and every other equality of the sexes, of all races and nationalities in the U.S.S.R., and makes the direct or indirect limitation of these rights, or the propaganda or spread of hatred against any race or nationality, a criminal offence.

Freedom to practise religious rights is given to all and also liberty to engage in anti-religious propaganda.

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In Chapter X the new Constitution also assures to all the inviolability of the person and of the home and the secrecy of the post. It grants freedom of speech, the Press, of meetings and street demonstrations and processions. It should be noted that such rights are not mere paper rights limited by the economic position of large classes of the citizens as is the case, to a certain extent, in many of the Western democracies.

The workers (by hand and brain) and their organizations are assured by the Constitution of being supplied with printing establishments, public buildings, and all other means required for the practical realization of these rights.

The one thing which is not permitted by the Constitution is any agitation or action for the restoration of capitalism or landlordism in the U.S.S.R. They are evidently not prepared to run any risk of losing the fundamental gains of the Soviet Revolution for the sake of assuring such liberties to the individual. This is in complete accordance with Lenin's thesis as set out briefly above.

Accordingly, whilst Article 126 empowers Soviet citizens to form associations such as trade unions, co-operative, cultural, scientific societies, etc., the only political organization mentioned is the Communist Party. This fact has led to many attacks upon the new Soviet Constitution. It has been urged that the absence of political parties other than the Communist Party makes Soviet democracy nothing but a sham. We cannot enter here into a full discussion of this subject, but we would urge that in the last analysis the party system in this and other countries is in the main the natural expression of the struggle between the different classes into which society is divided. But most socialists will surely also agree that in the actual daily life of the workers political democracy is very much restricted when unaccompanied by economic independence. It is, of course, a valuable means of struggling for the economic liberation of the workers; as such and to prevent the triumph of the barbarous systems of Fascism and Nazidom it is undoubtedly worth fighting for; but surely it can be conceded that

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in other circumstances democracy, equally and indeed more valuable to the masses of the people, may take different forms.

At the same time we see no reason to assume that the form of bourgeois democracy established in Western Europe is the last word in democratic government and that nothing but the party system can ensure the free and satisfactory working of democracy.

In a classless society, democracy may well take on other forms. True, in the first elections to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. there have been few electoral contests, since in nearly all the constituencies there was only one candidate (chosen in each case by huge representative meetings of workers, peasants, etc.), but this is not inherent in the Constitution. The fact that this was the first election of its kind, the discovery of organized wrecking and spying activities on the part of Soviet enemies at home and abroad, and even more, the international situation, the growing aggression of the Fascist Powers, the danger of an early outbreak of war—all this led to a desire to avoid contests, so as to demonstrate before the whole world the unity of the Soviet peoples. Undoubtedly at future elections when the wreckers at home will have been eradicated completely and the international situation has become somewhat more pacific, the rights granted by the Constitution to various organizations to run candidates will be taken advantage of by such organizations and we shall see electoral contests in the Soviet Union, albeit of a different kind, but none the less democratic for all that.

THE RECENT STATE TREASON TRIALS

A BOOK dealing with the history and progress of the U.S.S.R. would not be complete without a chapter on the great State treason trials held in Moscow during the last few years. These trials have quite naturally made a tremendous impression throughout the world, not only because of their human and intrinsically interesting political aspects, but above all because everything that concerns the internal stability and foreign relations of such a great, rich, and powerful country as the U.S.S.R.—whose potential wealth and power is indeed almost illimitable—cannot but be of the greatest significance to the whole world.

It has been freely suggested that the whole proceedings of the various trials have been nothing but a huge frame-up instigated by Stalin in order to vent his hatred against Trotsky and his supporters. It has been asked by many in this country why should the accused who, it is urged, were "Lenin's good comrades and assistants in the carrying through of the November revolution," have had to resort to wrecking, spying, and murder when they themselves were largely the Government? And apart from intentional misrepresentations in the Press, with the attitude of which we shall deal later, there has been a good deal of quite sincere mystification and amazement at the nature and cause of these spectacular trials. This attitude may be summed up in the following two quotations:

"What truth there is in the story of a widespread conspiracy among the Old Guard outsiders have no means of telling. It seems unlikely on the face of it that the men who devoted their lives to revolution should all, with only one or two exceptions, turn round to rend their own handiwork."¹

"Indeed, when men who have held high place and are tried for treason

¹ *The Times*, January 26, 1937.

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protest their guilt instead of their innocence, and instead of pleading for mercy agree with the Public Prosecutor that their lives stand justly forfeit for their crimes, the answer of the Soviet authorities to outsiders, who, untaught by past experience, thrust in a hotly resented plea for clemency, is logically complete. Yet even so, those who try to look at these Soviet State trials as objectively as possible are troubled because they contain so many circumstances which defy satisfactory explanation.

“What, in the first place, induced the Soviet authorities to stage this trial at the present moment? The star of Stalin is high in the ascendant; that of Trotsky is beneath the horizon. Contrary to the general expectation, the Stalin plan for the first five-years stage of the industrialization of Russia has been carried through with a remarkable measure of success. The second stage is now proceeding, so far as the world outside Russia can gauge, with even greater smoothness. Then why, if all is going well, drag men like Zinoviev and Kamenev from their obscure prisons and try them over again for complicity in the assassination of Kirov and in the plots against the life of Stalin, which fortunately failed? Even assuming that the new evidence of their guilt is as damning as the accused admit, these men, after all, were among the stalwarts of the original Bolshevik Revolution, and the personal friends of Lenin, the demigod of the new Russia.”¹

Not alone *The Times* and *Daily Telegraph*, but many Socialists and good friends of the U.S.S.R. have reasoned thus. We have referred in previous chapters to the activities of the opposition, but in order to furnish the reply to the above doubts and mystifications we must deal here at somewhat greater length with the history of the opposition to which all the accused belonged at one time or another and the attitude of the Party and Stalin to this opposition.

It is, of course, true that most of the prominent accused at the various State trials held important offices in the Soviet Government or State departments or within the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., but it is emphatically untrue to say that they had always been loyal adherents of Lenin and loyal Party and Soviet comrades. If one scans Lenin’s speeches and writings—many of these have now been translated into English—both before and after the

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, August 24, 1936.

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November Revolution, one finds repeated strong attacks on the attitude adopted on fundamental questions of Marxian theory and practice by Trotsky and the various leading accused in the State trials. Sometimes Lenin has occasion to flagellate Pyatakov, sometimes Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, and the rest.

Before the Russian Revolution these differences were being continuously fought out both within the Party ranks, at conferences and in the Socialist Press—they comprised such questions as the Socialist attitude towards the national minorities, the struggle of oppressed nationalities for freedom and independence, the attitude of the Party towards the trade unions, etc. We cannot stop to consider these questions in detail here, suffice it to say that these discussions were carried on in the usual strong, bitter language which has always characterized Russian political discussion. However, so long as the Party was still not in power, the disputants, in spite of all their disagreements, still remained apparently good comrades.

With the coming of the Revolution, these questions became of urgent practical moment. In particular the question as to the possibility of establishing Socialism in Russia whilst the rest of the world remained capitalist became of urgent practical importance. Of little less importance was the question of how to win the peasantry—the poor and middle peasants—to the side of the workers. In regard to the first point, Lenin, Stalin, and their adherents urged that Socialism could be constructed in one country. Indeed, Lenin had taught it was unlikely, in view of the different degrees of economic and political development, that many countries would simultaneously adopt Socialism. Of course there would always remain the danger of outside attack upon the Socialist country, in this case Soviet Russia, so long as the other countries still remained capitalist. They could successfully construct Socialism at home and emerge victorious there all along the line, but no Socialist country could feel itself permanently victorious and safe so long as the world remained predominantly capitalist.

· The Mensheviks and Socialist revolutionaries, on the other

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hand, maintained that the Russian Revolution, in view of the economic backwardness of Russia, must at that stage aim exclusively at the establishment of a bourgeois democracy in which they—the Russian Socialists—would settle down for a long period as a respectable opposition. Zinoviev, Kamenev, and their followers in practice shared this view, although they clothed it—each in his own way—in more revolutionary verbiage. The only thing that would satisfy them was world revolution—in the meantime Russia must remain capitalist.

Between March and November 1917, fierce discussion went on within the Bolshevik Party on such questions as the establishment in Russia of a proletarian dictatorship as an intermediate stage in the abolition of all classes; the necessity for an armed rising against the Kerensky Government, etc. In practically every case the Party sided with Lenin and Stalin on these questions and against Zinoviev, Kamenev, and their adherents. Naturally, the question of an armed rising, and particularly the proposed date at which it was to start, had to remain a dead secret if there were to be any hope of its success; but what do we find? Beaten within the Party, Zinoviev and Kamenev promptly published an attack on the decision of the Party regarding the armed rising of the workers in an anti-Bolshevik paper.

Lenin learnt of this from a phone message, but he at first refused to believe that any Party comrades could be capable of such a black act of treachery, and when he actually saw the printed statement with his own eyes his anger and disgust knew no bounds. He declared:

“Just think of it? It is known in Party circles that the Party since September has been discussing the question of insurrection. Nobody has ever heard of a single letter or leaflet written by either of the persons named! Now, on the eve, one might say, of the Congress of Soviets, two prominent Bolsheviks come out *against* the majority, and obviously *against* the Central Committee. . . .

“On the burning question of supreme importance, on the eve of the critical day of November 2nd (October 20th), and in the *non-Party* Press, indeed, in a paper which on this question is *hand in glove with the*

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bourgeoisie against the workers' party, two 'prominent' Bolsheviks attack an *unpublished* decision of the Party centre! . . .

"I should consider it disgraceful on my part if I were to hesitate to condemn these former comrades because of my former close relations with them. I declare outright that I no longer consider either of them comrades, and that I will fight with all my might, both in the Central Committee and at the Congress, to secure their expulsion from the Party."¹

However, albeit unwillingly and evidently without conviction, or more probably with a different object in view from that held by the majority of the Bolsheviks, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and their followers went with Lenin in the making of the November Revolution. But almost from the first day of the Revolution, although they continued to be members of the Party they together with other prominent members of the opposition who have been the accused in the State trials, continued to sabotage the consolidation of the November Revolution. Things reached such a pass that on November 15, 1917, the majority of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party passed the following resolution:

"This monstrous violation of discipline on the part of the members of the Central Committee behind the backs of the Central Committee and after many hours of discussion within the Central Committee, provoked by these representatives of the opposition themselves, makes it clear to us that it is the intention of the opposition to take the Party organizations by siege, by sabotaging the work of the Party at a time when the immediate result of that work will determine the fate of the Party and the fate of the Revolution. . . . We demand a categorical reply in written form to the question: Does the minority undertake to submit to Party discipline and to carry out the policy which is formulated in the resolution of Comrade Lenin adopted by the Central Committee?

"In the event of a negative or indefinite reply to this question, we shall immediately place before the Petrograd Committee, the Moscow Committee, the Bolshevik fraction of the Central Executive Committee, the Petrograd City Conference, and the Extraordinary Congress of the Party the following alternative:

"Either the Party entrusts the present opposition with the task of forming a new Government in conjunction with their allies, on whose

¹ *Lenin*, vol. 6, pp. 325-326.

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behalf the opposition are now sabotaging our work—in which case we shall reserve ourselves absolute freedom of action in relation to this Government, which will be incapable of offering anything but vacillation, impotence, and chaos.

“Or, which we do not doubt, the Party endorses the only possible revolutionary line, as expressed in yesterday’s decision of the Central Committee, in which case the Party must definitely propose to the representatives of the opposition that they carry on their work of disorganization outside the ranks of the Party organization. There is, and can be, no other alternative. Of course, a split would be highly deplorable. But an honest and open split would now be infinitely better than internal sabotage, violation of our own decisions, disorganization, and prostration.”¹

The members to whom this was addressed included, amongst others, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Rykov. Zinoviev and his friends resigned from all their responsible posts both in the Party and Government, but they did so with a defiant attack upon the Party. Whereupon on November 19, 1917, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party issued the following declaration to these members:

“By retiring from the Central Committee, but remaining within the Party, the representatives of your policy assumed an obligation to submit to the decisions of the Central Committee. However, not confining yourselves to criticism within the Party, you are introducing indecision into the ranks of the fighters in an insurrection which is still in progress, and are continuing, in defiance of Party discipline, to set at nought, outside our Party—in the Soviets, the municipal bodies, the trade unions, etc.—the decisions of the Central Committee, and are hindering its work.

“In view of this, the Central Committee is obliged to reiterate its ultimatum, and to call upon you either to give an immediate undertaking in writing to submit to the decisions of the Central Committee and to carry out its policy in all your actions, or to retire from all public Party activity and, pending the meeting of the Party Congress, to resign all responsible posts in the working-class movement.

“Refusal on your part to give one or the other of these undertakings will oblige the Central Committee to raise the question of your immediate expulsion from the Party.”²

¹ *Lenin*, vol. 6, p. 626.

² *Ibid.*, p. 412.

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Subsequently, Zinoviev withdrew his resignation from the Central Committee of the Party and the others, too, gradually again took up responsible posts—but their opposition to the Party line, sometimes open, sometimes clandestine, never ceased.

They, together with Trotsky, opposed the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, advocating the starting of a revolutionary war which, without a shadow of doubt, as Lenin foresaw so clearly, would have put “paid” to the Russian Revolution for a generation or more. We do not suggest that this was their conscious motive at the time, but we only wish to indicate how wrong-headed and irresponsible was their policy and how naïve their ideas.

It is, of course, well known that in 1918 the Left Socialist Revolutionaries were planning the overthrow of the Soviet Government. It has only recently become known, however, that Bukharin, Rykov, etc., worked in co-operation with the Socialist Revolutionaries to this end. In the course of one of the State trials Vyshinsky and certain witnesses alleged, indeed, that the aim was to assassinate Lenin, but Bukharin denied this at the trial so far as he was concerned, conceding, however, that although himself a member of the Bolshevik Party he was conspiring to arrest its leader—Lenin—and to overthrow the Government of his own Party. He also conceded that force was to be used, if necessary, though he did not specify exactly what that meant.

Kamenev, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Pyatakov, Sokolnikov, Radek, and the rest continued to oppose the Party line on such important questions as the monopoly of foreign trade; the significance of the State Bank in a Socialist economy; the planning of a Socialist economy; the attitude towards the peasantry, in particular towards the middle peasants; the solution of the agricultural problem; the formation of collective farms; the question of foreign concessions, etc. They were by no means always consistent in their opposition, they vacillated from time to time, but in any case they had always been given full latitude to discuss these subjects and to urge their own point of view within the Party, both while Lenin was alive and after he had died.

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Within the Bolshevik Party, right from its inception, there was always complete freedom of expression; but once a decision was taken it was demanded that all should conform to it, that confusion should not be sown in the minds of the people by the advocacy of different policies by different members of the Party. The organization of opposition groups and fractions within the Party was strictly forbidden. Self-criticism, i.e. criticism of mistakes of policy or practice made by the Party, was encouraged and was more often than not carried on boldly in public in order to educate the masses and to show them what the Party really stood for.

It was only when the opposition formed blocs against the majority of the Party, when they tried to organize demonstrations hostile to the Soviet Government and generally hindered the great work of reconstruction and the building of Socialism, that action was taken against them.

Those who regard these trials as a measure of personal revenge on the part of Stalin against Trotsky and the other accused will be surprised to learn that it was precisely Stalin who in the early days of the opposition whilst fighting them with arguments for all he was worth, nevertheless stood out strongly against any idea of their expulsion from the Party. Let us give a few facts:

Towards the end of 1924, the Leningrad opposition group, with Zinoviev at its head, demanded the expulsion of Trotsky from the Party. Trotsky, it may be remarked, had always been in more or less open or concealed opposition to the Party line. Actually Trotsky had never for any length of time been a loyal, stable Party member; even before the Revolution he stood halfway, as a party of one, between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, inclining, on the whole, more towards the latter than the former.

Stalin and the majority of the Central Committee of the Party rejected the demand for the expulsion of Trotsky. Later, the Leningrad group and also Kamenev urged the expulsion of Trotsky from the Political Bureau; but again Stalin and the majority rejected this and only removed Trotsky from his position as Commissar for War. Explaining this attitude, Stalin said:

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“We could not agree with Zinoviev and Kamenev because we realized that the policy of expulsion was a peril to the Party, that this method of chopping, of blood-letting—and they were out for blood—was dangerous, infectious. To-day one may be expelled, to-morrow another, the day after it will be a third—and what will be the result?”

Later, in 1925, Bukharin in the course of a speech in effect told the kulaks to go ahead and get rich. This fundamentally erroneous interpretation of the Party policy in regard to the stimulation of agricultural production at that particular period was justly attacked by various Party members, but in the interest of Party unity Stalin and the majority of the Central Committee of the Party—against the demand of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and the Leningrad group for the publication of these attacks—decided not to publish them but to limit themselves to a public acknowledgment by Bukharin that his slogan was fundamentally incorrect. Considering at that time that Bukharin was loyal in principle, they refused to hound Bukharin out of the Party and tried to stop attacks upon him.

“You demand Bukharin’s blood,” exclaimed Stalin, addressing himself to Zinoviev and his followers, “we shall not give you his blood.” And the majority was with Stalin.

Towards the end of 1925, the continuous anti-Party behaviour and demands of the Leningrad opposition group had brought the question of the unity of the Party to the fore and an attempt was made to come to terms with the opposition, but in vain, and it was then Stalin, in a concluding speech at the Fourteenth Conference of the Party, in December 1925, declared, amidst loud applause:

“We are against scissions in the Party . . . but this does not signify that leaders can do just what they like . . . the Party wants unity, and it will get this with Kamenev and Zinoviev if they also desire it, without them if they do not desire it. And what is the condition for unity? That the minority should respect majority decisions. Without this there can be no unity and no Party.”

Time went on, the discussions continued, the opposition did not grow in numbers, but it grew in bitterness and continuously widened the difference between itself and the majority of the Party.

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Stalin, in the course of a report to the Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., December 1927, quoted a characteristic letter in the *Izvestia* from a non-Party worker about to join the Party. Said this worker:

“Formerly we used to try and find out what were the differences which divided the opposition from the Party; but now one can no longer find anything on which the opposition agrees with the Party. The opposition opposes the Party on every question. Consequently, were I a supporter of the opposition I would certainly not join the Party.”

In every case, be it noted, the overwhelming majority of the Party was against the opposition. For instance, the Congress held in December 1927 decided by 724,000 votes against a little over 4,000 for the Party line defended by Stalin and the Central Committee of the Party.

Finally, when the opposition broke the rules of the Party time after time, continued to be flagrantly disloyal to its decisions, and pursued a policy of disruption, when they went on the streets, organized illegal demonstrations, established secret printing presses, issued illegal literature and appealed for support to non-proletarian elements, Trotsky and later Zinoviev and others, for similar reasons, were expelled from the Party.

It should be noted here that the relations between Trotsky, on the one hand, and Zinoviev, Kamenev, and their supporters on the other, changed several times. In 1924, Trotsky denounced Zinoviev and Kamenev as “Rights” and anti-Bolsheviks. A little later Zinoviev and Kamenev demanded the expulsion of Trotsky as an anti-Bolshevik; but by the beginning of 1926 we find Trotsky and the Zinoviev group joining hands again, each declaring that the other is a good representative of the true-blue (perhaps we should say here “red”) revolutionary Bolshevik policy. The same is true of many of the other accused who subsequently figured in the recent State trials.

Right and Left in the intervening years intertwined, sometimes apparently opposing one another, and other times coming together

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again, so that one could indeed hardly tell "which was Right and which was Left."

It may be noted in passing that just as Stalin and the Central Committee of the Party had been tolerant to the Trotsky opposition so long as they apparently remained more or less loyal to the Party, so in 1928, during the discussions of the First Five-Year Plan when the so-called "Right" opposition fought the Party line most strenuously on the industrialization of the country, the collectivization of agriculture, and the attack on kulak forms of agriculture, etc., it was precisely Stalin again who urged the use of argument and not expulsion as a method of fighting the "Right" so long as its leaders and members seemed to be loyal to Party decisions.

Throughout this period and up to the end of 1934, the only repressive measures brought to bear on the opposition was the dismissal of its leaders from important positions in the Government and expulsion from the Party. Trotsky, having continued to intrigue against the Soviet Government was expelled from the U.S.S.R. in 1928, and others such as Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rakovsky, etc., who continued their anti-Soviet activities were expelled from important urban areas and sent to Siberia and to various parts of the Eastern provinces of the country.

During this interval, however, many of the opposition leaders admitted their mistakes from time to time and were reinstated in the Party and given important Government posts. Thus, in the case of Zinoviev and Kamenev, who had been expelled from the Party in 1927, they were reinstated in 1928, but actually they continued their anti-Soviet activities, and in 1932 Zinoviev and Kamenev were again excluded from the Party when their connections with the counter-revolutionary group of Riutin was discovered. This group aimed at overthrowing the Soviet Government, the dissolution of the collective farms and the State farms, and the handing over of the great industrial constructions as concessions to foreign capitalists.

Or take the case of Radek. In October 1917, Radek came to

Russia and joined the Bolshevik Party. Here he opposed the Lenin position on the national and other questions. In 1918, in connection with the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, Radek, together with Pyatakov, became one of the most active leaders of the "Left" Communists, and supported the attempt of the "Left" to arrest Lenin.

In 1923, Radek became one of the leaders of the Trotsky opposition, and for his anti-Party and anti-Soviet activities the Fifteenth Congress of the Party in 1927 expelled him from the Party. In 1926, in the course of a discussion at the Communist Academy, Radek sneered at the idea of constructing Socialism in the U.S.S.R., characterizing it as an attempt to construct Socialism in one district, even in one street. In 1929, Radek, petitioning to be reinstated, declared that he was now convinced of the correctness of the general Party line, and as a result he was readmitted to the Party. He was given a number of responsible posts and was appointed a member of the Editorial Board of *Izvestia*. Whilst at this post Radek, however, according to his own confessions, continued to deceive the Party, renewed connections with Trotsky, organized terrorist groups, carried on negotiations with representatives of foreign Powers in Moscow for the partition of the U.S.S.R., etc.

During the Zinoviev trials in January 1935, and in August 1936, he pretended to be an enemy of Trotskyism, wrote hypocritical articles in the Press condemning Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev, thus masking his own counter-revolutionary work.

And so we might go through the whole list of prominent accused.

Although as far back as the Party Congress of 1927, Molotov had expressed the view that there undoubtedly existed criminal terrorist tendencies within the Trotsky-Zinoviev group and had said: "Consequently, the sharpening of the struggle and the personal attacks on different comrades may serve as a direct encouragement to criminal terrorist tendencies against leaders of the Party"; nevertheless, it is evident that neither Stalin nor the Central Committee thought that the various opposition leaders were

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actually organizing wrecking and diversion, and that they were in league with the Intelligence Services of foreign countries. They regarded the views of the opposition as erroneous, as under circumstances capable of leading to counter-revolution, but they did not consider them to be terrorists and traitors.

Then on December 1, 1934, came the assassination of Kirov. At about the same time a number of terrorists were arrested in various parts of the U.S.S.R. near the frontiers who had entered Soviet territory via Poland, Latvia, and Rumania, on whose persons were found false passports, revolvers, and hand grenades. It then became apparent that many of the oppositionists had secretly gone much further in their anti-Soviet activities than had been suspected. The indictment against Nikolaiev—the actual assassin of Kirov—stated, amongst other things:

“The investigation has proved that, in spite of the capitulation of the former Zinoviev anti-Soviet group, the conspiratorial work of the most active participants of this bloc did not cease . . . and they became particularly active in 1933-34 when the above-mentioned group with the so-called Leningrad centre was formed in Leningrad.”

Zinoviev and Kamenev were brought to trial in 1935, but at that time the authorities still had no definite proof of Kamenev's and Zinoviev's direct participation in the organization of this assassination and in the organization of other attempts on members of the Government. Kamenev was sentenced to five and Zinoviev to ten years' imprisonment as being only morally responsible for these acts. Later in the year the sentence on Kamenev was increased to ten years' imprisonment.

The assassination of Kirov opened the eyes of the authorities, especially in view of the rise of Nazidom in Germany and the increasingly aggressive policy of Japan, to the danger in their midst. They began a thorough investigation into the activities of the former opposition leaders, and facts were gradually brought to light showing not only the interconnection of the various ostensibly different opposition groups, but their connection with foreign Intelligence Services and the organization by them of wrecking

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and diversions, assassinations, etc., all with a view to overthrowing the Soviet Government. It was ultimately found that many of these conspirative, terrorist, wrecking and spying activities went back to at least 1921.

The question may arise: How is it that the crimes remained undetected so long? The reply is that G. G. Yagoda, one of the criminals, was for many years not only a leading member of the O.G.P.U., which should have kept a vigilant eye on subversive activities, but between 1924-34 he was Assistant-Chief, which, in effect, meant that he was at the head of this Department, for the Chief—Menzhinsky—had been a sick man for many years. Between 1934 and September 1936, Yagoda was also titular Chief of the O.G.P.U. Yagoda admitted at the trial that "had the Soviet intelligence service been free of the counter-revolutionary groups of Rights and spies who, thanks to me, occupied positions in the apparatus of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, the conspiracy against the Soviet Government would undoubtedly have been uncovered at its inception."

Yagoda was a traitor and adventurer if ever there was one. He admitted quite frankly that all his life he had only pretended to be and had never been a Bolshevik in the real sense, and he continued:

"I did not share the views and the programme of the Trotskyites; the question as to who would come out the victor (the Trotskyites or the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) was as yet not finally settled. In any event, that was what I thought. Therefore I, as Assistant-Chairman of the O.G.P.U., in carrying out the punitive policy, did it in a way that would not arouse the anger of the Trotskyites against me. When I was sending Trotskyites into exile, I created for them such conditions in their places of exile as enabled them to continue their activity.

"Things took the following shape: on the one hand, my conversations with Rykov determined my personal sympathy for the programme of the Rights. On the other hand, from all that Rykov told me about the Rights, about the fact that, besides himself, Bukharin, Tomsky, and Uglanov, the Rights had on their side the entire Moscow organization,

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the Leningrad organization and the trade unions—all this created the impression in my mind that the Rights might win in the struggle with the Central Committee. And since at that time they already raised the question of changing the leadership of the Party and of the Soviet Government, it was clear that the Rights were heading for power.

“It was precisely for the reason that to my mind the Rights seemed a real power that I told Rykov that I was on their side.”

With a man like this at the head of the O.G.P.U., it was no wonder the crimes had had such a long free run.

Step by step the authorities established the guilt of the various groups, and in this connection it may be pointed out that, contrary to the general assumption, the accused did not *confess* the whole of their guilt because they had got fed up with their nefarious work. Oh, no! they only *pledaded guilty* or confessed to so much as they saw they could no longer deny. In each successive trial they suppressed everything they possibly could suppress about the activities of the various opposition groups and organizations; they did not give away their fellow conspirators so long as they had reason to believe that the authorities did not yet know about their activities. Anybody who reads the verbatim reports of the successive trials cannot but be convinced of this. They pleaded guilty for exactly the same reason as accused in a British, French, or other court plead guilty, even though they may have at first denied their guilt, when they see that the evidence against them in the hands of the authorities is too strong. Unlike the procedure in Britain, in the U.S.S.R., as in many other countries, the taking of evidence, etc., is done in the preliminary examination.

We have seen that all the accused at one time or another were passionately against the Party and Soviet Government line. They utilized every possibility of fighting the Party and Government, but invariably found themselves in a minority. Nor had they been able to obtain any support from the masses of the people who, in spite of all the difficulties which the rapid industrialization of the country entailed during the first Five-Year Plan, nevertheless understood the temporary nature of those difficulties, to say nothing

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of the feeling inspired in them by the raising of their status as citizens, their access to education and culture, etc.

Under such circumstances, the opposition endeavoured to win support against the Soviet Government by trying to spread discontent among the workers and peasants; hence their endeavour to hinder the smooth working of the Five-Year Plan; hence their organization, whenever possible, of wrecks on the railways, of accidents in works, of bad and irregular supplies of manufactures to the villages and food to workers' dining-rooms, their deliberate sabotage of the proper organization of collective farms and the proper utilization of farm machinery and implements, their instigation to the slaughtering of cattle, etc.

Further, the Soviet investigating authorities found that another line of opposition activity was the organization of direct acts of terrorism against the Soviet leaders; one such attempt, that of the assassination of Kirov, succeeded, the others for one reason or another misfired. Finally, the investigations revealed connections between the accused and foreign Governments or their Intelligence Services.

During the preliminary investigations as well as in the course of the trials it was elicited that the accused had supplied potential enemies of the U.S.S.R. with secret military and other data about the country; that they had agreed to its dismemberment; that, in effect, they had agreed beforehand to act as a "fifth column" in the event of an outside attack upon the U.S.S.R.

Why did they do all this? How could they have sunk so low?

Subjectively, they may not have desired the establishment of Fascism in Russia, but side by side with their disbelief in the ultimate success of Socialism in the U.S.S.R., and their nursed hatred of the Soviet leaders against whom they could only muster the remnants of the former bourgeoisie in the towns and the kulak elements in the villages, they were also terrified at the spread of Fascism and came to the conclusion that it was better to make terms with the latter. This was brought out very clearly in Sokolnikov's evidence when he said:

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"We considered that Fascism was the most organized form of capitalism, that it would triumph, would seize Europe, and stifle us. It was therefore better to come to terms with it, it was better to consent to a compromise in the sense of retreating from Socialism to capitalism. All this was explained by the following argument: better make certain sacrifices, even very severe ones, than lose everything. I should explain, emphasize this principle, because without it, it would be quite impossible to understand how the bloc and the centre of the bloc could have entered upon the course of terrorist struggle, of wrecking struggle, of divisive acts, on a defeatist position."

And in his last plea Sokolnikov said:

"Our programme was anti-people. We could not count on the support of the masses. And that meant that the next step was that we were bound, and such an attempt was made, to pass to conspiratorial methods of struggle. We found that we had no weapon except conspiracy. There was no possibility whatever of a mass struggle. But even for conspiracy our own forces proved inadequate. Even for conspiracy . . . we were obliged to seek forces, to seek allies, outside our organization and outside our country. We were obliged to seek any allies we could come across, and we came across such as were the bitterest enemies of those with whom we had started the struggle.

"And so we passed from conspiracy to adventures, and these adventures immediately led us into the Fascist pitfall because we had found allies in the Fascist organization, and they seized hold of us, and we became their puppets."

Radek gives another additional reason; he said in the course of his last plea:

"Some of my fellow accused returned to the path of struggle as convinced Trotskyites, who permanently denied the possibility of building up Socialism in one country. I returned having ceased to believe this conception of Trotsky's. I returned because I shrank from the difficulties that confronted Socialism in 1931-33. This only shows that to admit the building of Socialism is easier theoretically than to possess the strength and firmness which was fostered only in those who followed the Party from profound internal conviction and did not combat it."

Radek shows in his last plea how, once having thrown in his lot with the Trotskyites because of his fear of the difficulties con-

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fronting the country, he sank deeper and deeper, even against his will, into the mire of conspiracy, wrecking and treachery, and even when he realized the futility of all this he had become so deeply involved that he could not break free.

Apart from attempts to instigate revolts and spread discontent amongst the people, the conspirators had what the Russians call a number of "variants"; one was to engineer a "palace revolution," i.e. to seize the Kremlin and the telephone exchanges, to kill the Soviet leaders and heads of Government departments, thus themselves seizing power. Certain generals, Tukhachevsky and others, hoped to lead a section of the army against loyal Soviet troops. Another variant was to aid outside attacks on the U.S.S.R., and then during the resulting difficulties to provoke a revolt in the Soviet Army and among the disgruntled elements composed of the remnants of the former bourgeoisie and kulaks.

The accused undoubtedly hoped that as Lenin and the Bolsheviks had triumphed against Tsardom and Kerensky, after heavy Russian defeats in the world war, so in the event of an outbreak of hostilities between the U.S.S.R. and the Fascist countries which they (the opposition) were doing their best to provoke, the U.S.S.R. would be defeated and they, the opposition leaders, would come out on top.

As for the possibility of a complete triumph of Hitler and other Fascist or Nazi leaders in the U.S.S.R., they hoped that in view of international rivalries and by combining with the kulak and other capitalist elements within Russia they (the bloc of Trotskyites and other counter-revolutionaries) could ultimately prevent the complete triumph of Fascism in Russia.

The evidence of the accused in all the trials showed that these ideas and aspirations animated most of them during the whole of their sabotaging, wrecking, conspirative and espionage activities. Whatever their original intentions, in effect, all their activities could only lead to the restoration of capitalism in Russia and to the ultimate triumph of Fascism.

At first sight it seems rather surprising that not a single one of

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the accused utilized his opportunities at the public trials to denounce the Soviet Government against whom they had plotted for so many years. Among the accused were many seasoned Russian revolutionaries, among whom it had always been a tradition not to let slip any occasion to indict the Tsarist Government whenever they had the least opportunity at a court trial or on the gibbet. How is it that among them there was not a single Dimitrov, who by common consent turned the Leipzig Court practically into a trial of the prosecution rather than of the accused?

To our mind the whole of the foregoing matter in this chapter gives the reply to this seeming puzzle. It was because the accused themselves realized that the platform upon which they stood was so anti-people, so devoid of any atom of Socialism, so, in effect, pro-capitalist and pro-Fascist that had they attempted to defend it they would have met with nothing but execration so far as the masses of the people were concerned.

Before the Party policy of constructing Socialism at home had succeeded, the subject could still be discussed. When the draft for the First Five-Year Plan was still only a draft, one could rightly or wrongly, but at least with some show of logic, oppose it. But now when the Party policy has proved right all along the line, when the Five-Year Plans have proved, on the whole, brilliant successes, when the people themselves feel and see how their standard of life and culture is rising, how could the opposition leaders indict all this and urge their own policy of restoring capitalism and giving rein to Fascism in the U.S.S.R.?—it would have only added to their moral degradation and shame.

It is thus clear that to represent the accused at the recent trials as the Old Guard of the Bolshevik Party is to distort the facts—it is to ignore that the policy of the opposition was consistently opposed not only by Stalin, but by such old Bolsheviks as Sverdlov, Kalinin, Dzerzhinsky, Menzhinsky, Ordzhonikidze, Litvinov, Kubyshev, Voroshilov, Petrovsky, Frunze, Kirov, Mikoyan, Kaganovitch, Zhdanov, Andreev, etc., and generally by the majority both in the Soviet Government and the Central Committee of

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the Communist Party as well as by the membership of the party as a whole.

A number of those tried at the State trials were well known abroad and they had always made a very good impression upon all those with whom they came into contact. We ourselves knew many of them very well indeed. Rakovsky, for instance, we had known as we then thought fairly intimately; he had always struck us as a most charming, honest, sincere man, and our own first reaction to the accusation, in particular against Rakovsky and Radek, was that there must be some mistake; we knew they had been Trotskyites, but we could not bring ourselves to believe that they could have engaged in spying and plotting against their country. Unfortunately, the facts which were revealed at the trial and the statements made by the accused left no alternative but to believe in their guilt. Such men, as we had thought them to be, if innocent, would never have admitted their guilt whatever threats might have been used against them or those dear to them. They would have proclaimed to the whole world in open court if any sort of pressure, physical or moral, had been exercised on them by the investigating authorities.

And our mind went back to a day before the war when we visited an elderly Russian friend living in London, an active member of the Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party. It was about a week after the noted Socialist Revolutionary leader, Azev, had been unmasked as a Tsarist provocative agent. Our friend was inconsolable. He and Azev had been close friends for years. "How is it possible," he exclaimed with anguish in his voice and tears in his eyes. "Only a short time ago I was with him, we discussed all sorts of personal and Party matters—there were no secrets between us . . . and now, to think that he was betraying me and the others all the time. . . ." Our friend seized his head with both hands, sat down heavily and groaned. What could we say?

Naturally, men who double-cross others, who act as spies and secret agents would be useless if they could not impress with their charm and sincerity those whom they wish to deceive.

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Sabotage, wrecking, treachery of former leaders and confidential persons in Government posts is, of course, by no means confined to the U.S.S.R. The history of every country teems with such examples, even in non-revolutionary times, still more so in times during and following upheaval and revolution.

The French Revolution is a classic example. Recall but the notorious case of General Dumouriez, who, in 1793, was at the head of the French revolutionary armies in Belgium. In view of suspicious conduct on his part, the Convention had sent a commission of inquiry to the front. His reply was the arrest of the Convention Commission; he handed them over to the enemy, and then made an attempt to march on Paris with the object of overthrowing the revolutionary Government.

Speaking of the activities of the Royalists, Aulard, the well-known historian of the French Revolution, says:

"We may say that royalism in France concealed itself at the beginning of the first Republic, during the military successes of September 1792 to December 1793. After the reverses and the treason of Dumouriez, it threw off the mask, and held the Republic at bay in the west, at Lyons, and at Toulon. *It spread its doctrines here and there in other regions, always commingling with movements of another nature, religious or anti-Parisian, and without making serious progress with the mass of the population.*"¹ (Our italics.)

"The holding up and robbing of diligences and stage-coaches was one of the means systematically recommended by the royalist leaders; means in general employment of delaying the complete re-establishment of order and security. The mobile columns which patrolled the country, and the soldiers who escorted the coaches, could not prevent the almost daily thefts and assassinations. France was almost terrorized. It was felt that the government which could not establish the security of the highways was not sound. This absence of confidence was one of the chief reasons why the impost was so irregularly paid during all this period; and it may be noted in passing that the terrible financial difficulties from which the directory suffered were due to the anxiety caused by the Royalists and the refractory priests."²

Kropotkin, referring to Dumouriez, says:

¹ *The French Revolution*, vol. ii, p. 322.

² *Ibid.*, vol. iv, p. 111.

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"Treason was everywhere, and we know now that at that very time—at the close of 1791—Dumouriez, the Girondist General who commanded the armies in the East of France, was already plotting with the King. He was drawing up for Louis a secret memorandum on the means for checking the Revolution. This memorandum was found after the taking of the Tuilleries in the iron safe of Louis XVI."¹

Take again the case of Lafayette who had made his way into the highest councils of the French Republic. Kropotkin, in his history of the Great French Revolution, quoted the following statement by Lally-Tollendall, a noted royalist:

"His (Lafayette's) proclamations to the army, his famous letter to the Legislative body, his unexpected appearance at the bar after the terrible day of June 20th,³ *nothing of this was unknown to me, nothing was done without my participation.* . . . The day after his arrival in Paris I spent part of the night with him; *we were discussing whether war should be declared against the Jacobins in Paris itself—war, in the full meaning of the word.* Their plan was to unite 'all the landowners who were dissatisfied, and all the oppressed who were numerous,' and to proclaim *No Jacobins, and no Coblenz*; to lead the people to the Jacobin Club 'to arrest their leaders, seize their papers, and pull down their house M. de Lafayette strongly desired this; he had said to the King: 'We must destroy the Jacobins physically and morally. His timid friends were opposed to this. He swore to me that he would, at least, on returning to his army, immediately set to work to find means for the King's deliverance.'⁴

But, adds Kropotkin:

"In spite of all, 'the commissioners sent to Lafayette after August 10 by the leaders of the Assembly had instructions to offer him the first place in the new order of things.' The treachery in the Assembly among the Girondins was thus much deeper than one would have thought."

¹ *The Great French Revolution*, pp. 235–6.

² Received by the Assembly on June 18th. In this letter Lafayette denounced the Jacobins. The Assembly, however, cast doubt on the authenticity of the letter. On June 23rd, Lafayette acknowledged the authenticity of the letter.

³ June 20, 1792, a practically peaceful invasion of the Tuilleries by the people of Paris, followed subsequently by fierce repression of all those responsible for the movement.

⁴ *The Great French Revolution*, pp. 286–7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

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Nor were the French counter-revolutionaries without support from abroad.

"Besides," says Kropotkin, "those who were against the Revolution were supported from without. England has always followed the policy she pursues to this day: that of weakening her rivals and creating partisans among them. 'Pitt's money' was no phantom. Very far from that. With the help of this money the Royalists passed quite freely from their centre and depot of arms, Jersey to St. Malo and Nantes, and in all the great seaports of France, especially those of St. Malo, Nantes, Bordeaux, the English money gained adherents and supported the 'commercialists' (*les commerçantistes*) who took sides against the Revolution. Catherine II of Russia did as Pitt did. In reality, all the European monarchs took part in this. If in Brittany, in the Vendée, at Bordeaux, and at Toulon the Royalists counted upon England, in Alsace and Lorraine they counted on Germany, and in the south upon the armed help promised by Sardinia, as well as on the Spanish army which was to land at Aigues-Mortes. Even the Knights of Malta were going to help with two frigates in this expedition."¹

These, of course, are only a small fraction of the cases which might be cited from the history of the French Revolution.

Nor is our own history free of treachery and sabotage. Throughout the existence of the Commonwealth, for instance, Royalist secret intrigues in which people apparently loyal to Cromwell participated were a constant source of worry and danger to the authorities, and a considerable part in the restoration of Charles II to the throne was played by Monk, Commander-in-Chief of the Commonwealth armies, who, whilst pretending loyalty to the Commonwealth, adroitly dispersed the troops over the country, and himself, behind their backs, carried on negotiations with the exiled Court.

Numerous other cases of treachery by seemingly trusty friends and officials in high posts could be cited from the times of Elizabeth and other periods of British history, and coming down to our own times we had, only a few years ago, the case of the "Officer in the Tower" who was proved to have dealings with a foreign Intelli-

¹ *The Great French Revolution*, pp. 252-3.

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gence Service and subsequently confessed to espionage on behalf of Germany; again, there are the recent reports of serious sabotage in British aeroplane construction works. If such things can happen in countries where ostensibly there is stability and peace, is it to be wondered at that, in Russia which has only recently gone through a most tremendous upheaval, in which there has been a revolution far more fundamental than any that has ever occurred in human history—a revolution which the Government and people are still engaged in consolidating and perfecting—is it to be wondered at that in such a country there should be attempts both inside and outside to wreck all the great work of the Revolution?

Soon after the Soviets assumed power they had to fight foreign intervention and subsidized civil war on a number of fronts. Although the rank and file of the Russian army, in the main supported the Soviets, by far the greater part of the officers and commanders bitterly opposed them. Many of these officers, for a variety of reasons, took service in the subsequently organized Red Army and Navy, and much as the workers distrusted the officers, they were compelled to utilize them for want of experienced military leaders of their own.

Hence the formation of workers' commissions and supervisors to keep a watch on the commanding staffs of the army and navy and to prevent them from betraying the interests of the workers and peasants. Many of the Soviet leaders still have vivid memories of those days and of the acts and attempts of betrayal and sabotage by these class enemies.

In this connection the following example is interesting: the late Boris Savinkov (Minister for War in the Kerensky Government) related in his diary, entitled *The Black Horse*,¹ how he and his confederates carried on espionage and sabotage against the Soviet Government in the spring of 1921. Thus he says:

"Fedia's name is no longer Moshenkin, but Kovalev. He is in service of the Ve-Cheka, the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for the Suppression of the Counter-Revolution. Egorov is not Egor

¹ Published by Williams & Norgate, Ltd., London.

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but Larionov. He works as caretaker in the Commissariat of Public Health. Vrede is not Vrede, but Laso. He commands a squadron in the Red Army. All three have false passports, so-called 'dead' documents, that is, documents of people who have been killed. All three are members of the Bolshevik Party—'convinced Communists.' Ivan Lukitch is a speculator. He lives under his own name and keeps in contact with the 'Committee,' that is to say, our conspirative organization. As for myself, nameless and unseen, I hide at the houses of different people who, of course, thereby risk their lives" (page 100).

And in subsequent pages he describes one of the actual acts of sabotage and destruction, as follows:

February 6th.

"The landlady, Pelagea Petrovna, takes out the empty samovar. . . . Egorov frowns at her.

'Is she a she-devil, too?'

'No, she's one of us. Listen, Egorov ——'

'Yes, Colonel.' (Savinkov.)

'At Kuntzevo, on the third reserve track, there stands a train. It is loaded with munitions for the Moscow garrison. To-morrow you are not on duty at the Commissariat. Go and blow up the train at dinner-time.'

"He nods with his long beard. 'Now, that's sense, thank God,' he says, with deep satisfaction. And adds distinctly, as receiving military orders, 'Yes, sir.'"

February 7th.

"Kuntzevo. A frosty morning. The glitter of the snow blinds the eyes. To the right—the park, the fluffy triangles of fir-trees. . . . To the left—the station and the tracks. The third reserve track.

"Five minutes to one. Watching, I saw a spark in the third car from the engine. It flashed, then went out. Then all of a sudden a flame broke out. There was a rumbling sound, dull and short. And immediately a tongue of fire leapt into the air, carrying with it chips and debris. Like a fountain it rose to the skies and spread into a huge, oblong ring. A vast cloud of smoke settled in the heavens, hanging darkly over the forest" (pp. 103-4).

Savinkov, it should be recalled, was a noted Russian Socialist revolutionary in Tsarist days. Is it so very unlikely that others were able, like Vrede, to mask themselves sufficiently well to obtain

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important posts within the army and so remain undetected till the present time?

As for civil administration, not all the former bourgeoisie, former nobles, police and officer class had emigrated. Many have, of course, remained at home. Some have gone over sincerely to the Soviets—this is undoubtedly true of a very large section, now a majority, of the technical intelligentsia, others, a smaller section, have merely sought to make a good career for themselves in Soviet service; another section, not large, but none the less active, having become convinced that the Soviets were too strong to be overthrown in open fight, have curried favour with the Soviet authorities, have by a show of zeal wormed themselves into positions of authority in administrative departments, in important sections of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., in order to be the better able to sabotage or to wreck Soviet planning and Soviet Socialist construction.

Numerous cases might be cited of disloyal managers who have sought to wreck plans and enterprises by drafting unworkable plans, by discrediting good plans, drawn up by higher Soviet authorities, by minimizing the possibility of the enterprises under their control, etc. Cases have been disclosed of wilful bad organization, by the placing of men in responsible positions who had no experience and were not fit for the work assigned to them. Amongst other examples of sabotage may be mentioned neglect to carry out the labour protection measures required by Soviet law; the wilful bad organization of the workers' food supply and factory dining-rooms; failure to pay wages punctually and the use of the money for other non-authorized purposes; the hounding out of office of loyal workers who sought to carry out honestly Government instructions and plans, and so on.

In the early days the Soviets fought against such disloyal elements by placing authority in a supervising commission composed of workers, or in the factory workshop committees which acted as a check upon dishonest or hostile managers. But with the expansion of Soviet industry this method became unwieldy; moreover, the

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steady increase in the number of young Soviet-trained loyal specialists made this unnecessary and one-man management and personal responsibility was established. However, where a disloyal manager or official obtained a position of trust, the new organization gave him additional opportunity to sabotage the State enterprises and such active sabotage has been disclosed from time to time.

And these were the elements upon which the former Communists, such as Zinoviev, Kamenev, Sokolnikov, Bukharin, etc., relied for help within the country in overthrowing the Soviet Government.

We would add here that American engineers who have worked in Russia were quite convinced that a good deal of wilful sabotage was going on there. For instance, Mr. W. A. Rukeyser, an American specialist, describing his personal experiences in his book, *Working for the Soviets*,¹ says:

“That there is a great deal of premeditated sabotage going on in Russia (to-day to a much lesser degree) on the part of those antagonistic to the present regime is obvious to most of the American specialists in Russia with whom I have discussed the matter. Certainly not all the mistakes or slowing down of *tempo* can be attributed only to red tape, lack of practical experience, or ignorance” (p. 233).

Still more instructive are the experiences of the American mining engineer, Mr. J. D. Littlepage, employed in the U.S.S.R. as an expert for ten years. He worked with a number of the men accused and condemned in the recent trials, and in an article in the *Saturday Evening Post*, January 1, 1938, he expresses his conviction that most of them were guilty. He declares:

“Solely on the basis of my own experiences, I can testify that industrial sabotage is a commonplace in Soviet Russia. It often bears strong evidence of being directed and organized in high places. I have come across indisputable proof of deliberate sabotage on numerous occasions. Some of this seemed to be petty and unorganized, but some could hardly have been possible without the participation of important Communist managers.”

¹ Jonathan Cape, 30 Bedford Square, London.

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So far as the confessions of the accused referred to industrial sabotage (of which alone he can speak with authority), Mr. Littlepage is convinced that the confessions were genuine, and he says very definitely:

“When I read the testimony of Yuri Pyatakov, Vice-Commissar of Heavy Industry, and some of his fellow-defendants at the conspiracy trial in January 1937, I finally understood some matters which had been puzzling me since I first came in contact with organized Soviet wrecking in 1932.”

Mr. Littlepage describes cases of sabotage which he himself came across, and declares:

“My own experiences made me suspicious of a number of Communist industrial leaders years before the present round up of Communist conspirators started in the middle of 1936. It, naturally, wasn’t my business to warn Joseph Stalin and his associates against fellow party members, but some Russians can bear witness that I mentioned my suspicions to them as early as 1932, after I had worked for some months in the Ural copper mines.”

Extremely instructive is his description of his experiences in the Khalata copper mines in the Southern Urals and the lead-zinc mines of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Littlepage is also extremely instructive when he describes an occasion in 1931 when, as a technical expert, he accompanied a purchasing commission headed by Pyatakov to Berlin. “Some things,” says Mr. Littlepage, “happened on that occasion which I never understood until I read Pyatakov’s testimony at his trial in 1937.”

It will be recalled that various accused testified that a reserve fund for their anti-Soviet work had been built up by obtaining rebates on purchases from German firms; well, Mr. Littlepage gives one very instructive example of how the commission, headed by Pyatakov, were ready, but for his decisive objection, to purchase worthless machinery for the copper industry at a high price. This deal fell through; but what about deals which had not to go through the hands of an honest expert?

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The experiences of Mr. Littlepage, being those of a practical engineer, who says he knows nothing of Communism and is not very interested in politics, and who when he does express an opinion on such matters is definitely anti-Communist and anti-Soviet, are extremely significant.

And now for a few words regarding the attitude of the Press towards the trials.

The first reactions of the British Press was that the confessions of the men on trial just could not be genuine; the Soviet authorities were accused of extracting them by threats, torture, hypnotism. All kinds of lurid stories were concocted of Tibetan and other drugs which might have been administered and, *mirabile dictu*, made the prisoners say exactly what the prosecution wanted them to say, not only in their signed confessions but during days of intensive public cross examination. The *Daily Mail*, as one might expect, specialized in spreading such gruesome goblin tales during the earlier trials; it was therefore all the more significant that with respect to the trial in March 1938, Mr. Ward Price, in that journal (March 8, 1938) said:

"What conceivable explanation is there for such abnormally stoical insensibility? The confessed traitors know that they cannot escape the death penalty. They have nothing to gain by their abject self-reproaches, nothing to lose by defying to the last the regime for whose ruin they declare they have been working for many years.

"Why should the fact of being found out have changed their attitude towards Bolshevism?

"*Torture?* Men whose spirits had been broken by torment would show some outward signs of their sufferings, and would not have the liveliness of wit to exchange smart repartee with their judges.

"*Terror?* It is possible that the OGPU—the Russian secret police—have seized their relatives as hostages, but would Yagoda, himself till lately the head of that diabolically cruel gang, have faith in any promises of immunity for them that might be made?

"Moreover, the evidence at this trial is being given into the microphone and broadcast, so that anyone who knows Russian can tune in and listen. If torture or terrorism had brought about the prisoners' submission surely one of them would blurt out the truth to the unseen listening world outside.

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"There remain the theories that these self-accusers have been drugged or hypnotized. But there is no form of either treatment known to science which would maintain its effects over a man for hours without producing any visible change in his bearing."¹

It is interesting to observe that in the first place the view that the whole proceedings were unreal, a frame-up, became less and less strong with every succeeding trial. Secondly, that foreign correspondents actually present at the trials did not assert that the indictments were a mere frame-up; on the contrary, some of them were very much impressed with the genuineness of the case against the accused. We give just a few of these.

The Moscow Correspondent of the *Observer*, on August 23, 1936, concluded his report on the proceedings thus:

"It is futile to think the trial was staged and the charges trumped up. The Government's case against the defendants is genuine."

The *Daily Herald* Correspondent said:

"A second great political trial has come and gone in Moscow within six months. Again we have heard one-time revolutionaries confess to counter-revolution and the most shocking career of murder, sabotage, and anti-government conspiracy of modern times.

"Now, instead of Zinoviev plotting to assassinate Stalin, we have Radek, renowned for twenty years as a Communist spokesman, planning with Nazi aid 'the return of capitalism to Russia.'

"Yet to an eye-witness who attended the Zinoviev trial and who has lived in the Soviet Union since 1934 this proved to be the converse of fantastic as the case unfolded hour by hour and day by day. Nor is the writer's opinion an isolated one. It was generally shared by the other foreign observers present."²

¹ The proceedings were not actually broadcast, but they were held in public in the presence of many foreign correspondents and foreign diplomatic representatives, including the British and U.S.A. Ambassadors to Moscow, and a denunciation by the accused of the use of torture or threats, etc., by the Soviet authorities would have been as effective as if the proceedings were broadcast. This was illustrated by the great effect produced abroad by Krestinsky's withdrawal of his confession on the first day of the trial. On the following day, however, Krestinsky again admitted the truth of the indictment against him and his confessions.

² Preface to Moscow Trial (January 1937) issued by the Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee.

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The *Daily Telegraph* Moscow Correspondent, whose attitude towards the Soviets has never been friendly, in an article on the trial in which he, in general, belittled the evidence against the accused, nevertheless said:

"It seems to me established that several of the leading accused did carry on clandestine and seditious correspondence with the exiled leader Trotsky, although no documentary evidence has been produced for this, all Trotsky's letters and written messages exchanged between these old friends in the revolutionary struggle having naturally been destroyed.

"I am unable to express any real opinion regarding the strange confessions of Pyatakov, Radek, and Sokolnikov that they were preparing, under Trotsky's orders, to sell Russia to Germany and Japan, ceding the Ukraine to Germany, and the entire Russian Far East, including Vladivostok, to Japan. I do believe they did discuss what line they ought to take as Old Bolsheviks after what they regarded, at least down to early 1935, as the inevitable defeat of the Red Army in the field, and how to undertake the old heroic task of starting an entirely new Bolshevik revolution on orthodox Lenin lines.

"There remain the charges of 'wrecking combined with espionage' on behalf of certain German firms to which the 'Young Bolshevik' engineer Stroilov, the son of collectivized peasants, and some other of the 'second line' accused confessed on Tuesday. In my opinion these charges ought to have been the subject of a separate trial. Stroilov obviously has fallen under German Nazi influence—I suspect partly for reasons of graft, because agents of German firms supplying industrial equipment to Russia presumably work on a commission basis."¹

Mr. Dudley Collard, an English barrister and member of the Executive of the National Council for Civil Liberties and the Howard League for Penal Reform, and a fluent Russian scholar, stated:

"I have never heard such a tale of treachery, murders, spying, sabotage, and terror as the prisoners have told, with complete callousness and effrontery.

"In my opinion, there can be no question of a 'faked' trial, either with or without the connivance of the accused.

"It is obvious to anybody that the prisoners who do most of the

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, January 28, 1937.

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talking, while Prosecutor Vyshinsky confines himself to an occasional question, are behaving spontaneously.

"No set of seventeen men could act their parts so brilliantly nor sustain their activity in this way without a slip for four long days."

"They are clearly in full possession of their faculties, do not appear to be terrorized, and look well.

"There is nothing to prevent any of them from alleging that the charges are 'framed.' "¹

The Moscow Correspondent of the *News Chronicle*, January 26, 1937, stated:

"All assertions abroad of broken spirits of the defendants and the administration of narcotics upon them by the State to force proper replies is sheer nonsense. The accused are well dressed, appear to be well fed, and in the best of health.

"They speak their mind with rare interruptions from the prosecutor, often asking for the floor, and being given it in the course of fellow-defendants' testimony."

And on the 27th the same correspondent said:

"An important statement on the bearing of the witnesses was made to me to-day by a well-known foreign diplomat who had been attending the sessions daily.

"'As a lawyer and judge of many years' experience,' he said, 'I have acquired the ability, generally to tell accurately when the accused in court is telling the truth. I am convinced that these people are telling the truth.' "²

This was corroborated by other correspondents, notably Mr. Walter Duranty, the well-known Moscow Correspondent of the *New York Times* and recognized as one of the ablest journalists in Europe. He declared:

"The prosecution was also fortunate in being able to 'star' Pyatakov, whose words carried conviction to the most obdurate hearers. One of the most experienced foreign diplomats told the writer to-night: 'If this is lying, then I have never heard truth.' "²²

¹ *Daily Herald*, January 28, 1937. ² *New York Times*, January 24, 1937.

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And again on January 25th, in the *New York Times*, Mr. Duranty says:

"Radek taught me so much and helped me so often—how could I believe him guilty until I heard him say so? Stalin himself had confidence in Radek until the evidence—and Radek's own confession—made doubt impossible."

The view of correspondents on the spot were equally, if not more, well marked in the trial of March 1938. They were impressed with the soundness of the evidence of the prosecution, with the sincerity, in the main, of the confessions, and with the fact that the Soviet Government really had unearthed a serious anti-State conspiracy in which wrecking, espionage, etc., played an important part. To give two examples:

The *News Chronicle* Moscow Correspondent (March 5, 1938) stated:

"Red Army leaders executed last year had completed plans for a military coup in May involving the seizure of the Kremlin and the OGPU (Secret Police) headquarters and the assassination of leaders, including Stalin.

"This was a revelation, throwing light on the great army purge last year, made by two of the twenty-one accused to-day at the treason trial here.

"Details of this plot, which led directly to the purge, were given in evidence by A. P. Rosengoltz (a former Commissar for Foreign Trade, and at one time Chargé d'Affaires in London).

"His testimony was corroborated by Krestinsky (Deputy Assistant of Foreign Affairs till last year), who at first denied guilt, but afterwards pleaded guilty.

"Rosengoltz is charged with espionage on behalf of Britain and Germany.

"His evidence not only explains last year's secret trials and shootings of generals, but clarifies many other startling events in the past year.

"Krestinsky declared that the intended military coup and seizure of the Kremlin coincided with the British Coronation, at which Tukhachevsky (Chief of the General Staff, executed last June) was to have represented Russia.

"The general did not go to the Coronation, and the date of the coup was changed to a fortnight earlier than originally intended.

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"It was apparently at this time that the secret police began to suspect army leaders. Tukhachevsky's arrest meant the end of the coup.

"Thus as main threads of the recent conspiracies are being revealed, successive trials are seen to be parts of one great drama.

"All the accused are giving testimony damning themselves with an air of complete sincerity."

The Times special Moscow Correspondent (March 7, 1938) reported:

"In France twenty years ago your correspondent saw trials of traitors—the 'Bonnet Rouge' group, and Bolo Pasha, that slick adventurer—caught hopelessly in a net of greed, crime, and circumstance. But Bukharin was different. What he tried to say, perhaps more than what he said, brought to many of his foreign hearers a sense of reality and synthesis behind this vast, rambling conspiracy in spite of the inconsistency, absurdity, and, one suspects, deliberate inaccuracy of some parts of the evidence. . . .

"Yesterday's evidence from the ex-Ambassadors Rakovsky, Krestinsky, and Ikramov, former Party Secretary for Central Asia, gave considerable support to the second part of the prosecution's thesis that the accused were in league with provincial anti-Soviet—one might almost say anti-Russian—Nationalists and with a small group of high-ranking malcontents in the Red Army, and with potential foreign enemies."

Finally, it will be interesting to give the views of two very well-known men—not present at the trial—but who cannot be suspected of any undue friendship towards the Soviet Government.

Sir Bernard Pares, Professor of Slavonic Studies at the London University, who knew pre-war Russia well, in an article in the *Spectator*, September 18, 1936, said:

"As to the trial generally, I was in Moscow while it was in progress and followed the daily reports in the Press. Since then I have made a careful study of the verbatim report. Having done that, I must give it as my considered judgment that if the report had been issued in a country X (that is other than the U.S.S.R.) without any of the antecedents I have referred to, the trial would be regarded as one which could not fail to carry conviction.

"The examination of the sixteen accused by the State Prosecutor is a close work of dispassionate reasoning, in which, in spite of some denials

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and more evasions, the guilt of the accused is completely brought home. The act of indictment, which is very full and covers thirty pages, frequently cites the admissions of the accused in the preliminary examination, but does not in itself present any difference from what procedure might have been elsewhere.

“It is only in the final speech of the State Prosecutor that he rises to heights of passion, and even here, in view of the admissions made by the accused, he hardly says more than might have been expected from many prosecuting barristers in this country. In the light of this record the only possible repudiation of the results of the investigation would have to be based on an assumption that the whole procedure was from start to finish a gigantic ‘frame-up.’ For this the record itself presents no kind of justification.”

“Scrutator,” writing in the *Sunday Times*, January 31, 1937, said:

“But it is hard to remain wholly sceptical of confessions so circumstantial and penitential. Radek told the Court that he confessed only when he was confronted with the confession of the others. He may whittle away the particulars, but it is a hard irreducible core which says ‘I was wrong, I was wicked to do what I did. I deserve to die.’ The strong probability is that he was a traitor, and did many of the things of which he is accused.”

In conclusion, we wish to deal with one more point. It has been urged, not without truth, that the State trials have spread dismay among many would-be friends of the Soviets, that they have made the U.S.S.R. unpopular in circles which, particularly at the present juncture of world affairs, desire to support the U.S.S.R., that they have made many who would like to see co-operation between the U.S.S.R. and the bourgeois democratic countries against the aggression of the Fascist States doubt the strength and stability of the U.S.S.R. It cannot be imagined for a moment that the Soviet Government knows so little of what goes on abroad not to be aware of all this; but they evidently also realize—and who will deny it?—that it is not a sign of strength to hide a festering sore instead of boldly cutting it out before it can infect the whole body.

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The goodwill of foreign opinion is important, but it is not nearly as important as the health, stability, and vigour of the body politic at home.

The Spanish Democratic Government was tolerant to its Fascist generals, Franco and Co., as a result it no doubt kept the good opinion of democratic leaders abroad. But when the Spanish Fascists, after a period of preparation with the help of Italy and Germany, launched an attack upon the Spanish Republican Government—how much help did they obtain from the bourgeois democratic countries? What availed such help as they did receive from parties and individuals in other countries, however welcome—in stemming the slaughter of thousands of Spanish democrats by the hordes of Moors and Fascists?

It should not be forgotten that, as is well known, Fascist agents and spies abound in all countries at the present time; that to quote only two examples, the disclosures in connection with the French Cagoulard plots, and the Nazi-inspired and Nazi-led Sudeten German movement in Czechoslovakia, prove that widespread conspiracies are being engineered to provoke civil war for the purpose of strengthening world Fascism in general and Fascist German hegemony in Europe in particular. These plots have already succeeded in provoking bitter civil war in Spain and in wiping Austria off the map as an independent country.

Who would dare maintain that it would be to the advantage of world peace and of the non-Fascist countries if the Soviet Government had permitted these subversive movements to develop in the U.S.S.R.?

The following statement made by Stalin in 1931 in the course of an interview rings equally true to-day:

“When the Bolsheviks came into power, they began by showing leniency towards their enemies. The Mensheviks continued to exist lawfully and to bring out their newspaper. So did the Revolutionary-Socialists. Even the Cadets (Constitutional-Democrats) continued the publication of their newspaper. When General Krasnov organized his

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counter-revolutionary march on Petrograd and fell into our hands we might, according to the rules of war, at least have kept him prisoner. More than that, we ought to have shot him. But we freed him on parole. What was the result of this? We soon found that this leniency only undermined the stability of the power of the Soviets, and that we had made a mistake in giving proof of our forbearance towards the enemies of the working classes. If we had continued to be so forbearing we should have committed a crime against the working classes, and we should have betrayed their interests."¹

There can be very little doubt that, freed of the treacherous generals, the Red Army is stronger than it has ever been before; that having rooted out—and where necessary still continuing the process—wreckers, spies, adventurers, assassins, from their national economy, the U.S.S.R. will become stronger economically than ever before.

Finally, we would point out that the very fact that these trials have been held at the present time—when the international situation is exceedingly disturbed and when the U.S.S.R., like other countries striving for peace, needs every ounce of military and economic strength it can muster—is only one more proof, if that were necessary, of the absolute genuineness of the case against the accused. Practically all the men brought to trial were doing, so far as the outside world could see, extremely useful work in various fields—diplomacy, army, industry, agriculture, journalism, etc.—surely only super criminal lunatics could have conceived the idea of removing these men from their posts and making false, fantastic accusations against them. This supposition has only to be stated for its utter absurdity to become apparent.

The trials were held when they were, simply because the Soviet authorities consider that the well-being of their citizens at home, whose standard of life depends upon the existence of honest economic and political leaders and officials and on healthy loyal defence forces and diplomacy, is of greater importance than the opinions about the Soviets held by certain individuals and circles abroad.

¹ Quoted by H. Barbasse in his book on Stalin, p. 90.

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